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Christopher Junior: Com-
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Christopher Junior

BY

MADELINE LUCETTE RYLEY



AMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th St., New York



CHRISTOPHER JUNIOR

Comedy in Four Acts

BY

MADELINE LUCETTE RYLEY

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Sept. 14, 1895.

FOURTH ANNUAL SEASON,

MR. JOHN DREW,

Under the management of CHARLES FROHMAN

Presenting a Comedy in Four Acts, entitled

CHRISTOPHER, JR.

By MADELINE LUCETTE RYLEY.

CHARACTERS.

Christopher Colt, Jr.....	JOHN DREW
Christopher Colt, Sr.....	HARRY HARWOOD.
Tom Bellaby.....	LEWIS BAKER.
Major Hedway.....	LESLIE ALLEN.
Mr. Simpson.....	ARTHUR BYRON.
Mr. Glibb.....	HERBERT AYELING.
Job	JOSEPH HUMPHREYS.
Whimper	FRANK LAMB.
Mrs. Glibb.....	ELSIE DE WOLFE.
Mrs. Colt.....	ANNIE ADAMS.
Nelly	ANNA BELMONT.
and	
Dora	MAUDE ADAMS.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Christopher, Jr.'s apartments in Grosvenor Gardens, London.

ACT II.—Christopher, Sr.'s reception-room of his house in Devonshire.

ACT III.—The Major's quarters in Bombay.

(Six weeks are supposed to elapse)

Intermission—One minute.

ACT IV.—The same as Act III.

TIME—The Present.

CHRISTOPHER JUNIOR.

Performed at Terry's Theatre, London, 14th Feb., 1896.

CHARACTERS.

Christopher (Colt) Jedbury, Sr. } (<i>an East Indian Merchant</i>) .. }	MR. JOHN BEAUCHAMP.
Mrs. (Colt) Jedbury (<i>his Wife</i>)	MISS EMILY CROSS.
Christopher (Colt) Jedbury, Jr. } (<i>their Son</i>)	MR. FREDERICK KERR.
Nelly (<i>their Daughter</i>).....	MISS EVA MOORE.
Whimper (<i>their Man-servant</i>).....	MR. GILBERT FARQUHAR.
Job (<i>valet to Jedbury Junior</i>).....	MR. L. POWER.
Major Hedway (<i>a retired soldier</i>)	MR. J. L. MACKAY.
Dora (<i>his Niece</i>)	MISS MAUDE MILLETT.
Mr. Glibb (<i>President of the Association</i> } <i>for Suppression of Juvenile Gambling</i>) }	MR. J. E. BELLAMY.
Mrs. Glibb (<i>his better half</i>)	MISS ELSIE CHESTER.
Tom Bellaby (<i>a young Lawyer</i>).....	MR. ARTHUR PLAYFAIR.
Mr. Simpson (<i>Manager of the</i> } <i>Bombay House</i>)..... }	MR. EDWARD BEECHER.

ACT I.—Jedbury Junior's apartments in Grosvenor Terrace, London.

ACT II.—Jedbury Senior's reception room in his house in Devonshire.

ACT III.—The Major's quarters in Bombay.

ACT IV.—The same.

TIME.—The Present.

When Christopher Junior was produced in London it was under the title of Jedbury Junior, the names of the principal characters having been changed to Jedbury.



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CHRISTOPHER JUNIOR.

ACT I.

SCENE.—JEDBURY JUNIOR'S apartments. *A very shabby attic room—bedroom communicating R., and door to stairs L. Window with ragged curtains C. back. A balcony outside, leading to fire escape. A shabby sofa R.; rickety table L.; a few chairs; sideboard L. back; cups, saucers, and teapot on sideboard, also sugar bowl, poker chips, and playing cards; a wooden shelf with brackets, nails, hammer, etc., on floor near door R.; broken plaster in ceiling over table L.*

(*At rise of curtain JOB enters door L. He carries large pile of books, then drops them on floor near where shelf is lying. He then returns to door L. and brings in a large assortment of boots and shoes. These he carries across room till he stands before open door R., when he throws boots in, one by one. He returns again to door L. and fetches bundle of photographs and several pipes, which he carries to mantel over fireplace R. He arranges photos and pipes on mantel. Knock at door L.*)

JOB. (*without turning*) Not at home.

Enter BELLABY.

BELL. The deuce you're not? (*crosses front of table to C.*)

JOB. (*turning*) Oh, it's you, sir? I beg pardon, but them's the orders.

BELL. (*looking round*) What are you doing here?

JOB. We're moving, sir.

BELL. Moving! Why, what's up?

JOB. We are, sir. Can't get no higher, unless we go on the tiles.

BELL. Where is Mr. Jedbury?

JOB. Just stepped out. He won't be long, sir.

BELL. And what has induced him to exchange his flat on the second floor for this garret?

JOB. (*still arranging photos*) Can't say exactly, sir. (*going*) (*crosses to L.C.*) Excuse me, we ain't all up yet.

BELL. All right, Job, don't mind me; I'll wait for a few minutes. (*puts down hat and walks to mantel*)

JOB. Take a seat, sir.

JOB exits L.

BELL. I wonder what Chris's little game is. (*takes up photo—reads*) "Christopher Jedbury Junior as Charles Surface." (*takes another*) H'm! "As John Mildmay"! (*puts down photos*) So he still dabbles in amateur theatricals.

Enter NELLY JEDBURY L.

NELLY. (L.) (*not seeing who it is*) I beg your pardon.

BELL. (*turns round*) Good gracious! why, it's Nelly! (*goes to her*) I beg your pardon, Miss Jedbury.

NELLY. (*extending her hand*) What! Tom!—Mr. Bellaby! I am so glad to have met you; they told me downstairs that Christopher wasn't at home. They almost refused to let me wait. (*looks round in dismay*) Oh!

BELL. What's the matter?

NELLY. (*going up L.*) We must have made a mistake. Chris would never live in *this* room. (*goes up L C.*)

BELL. (*aside*) What am I to say? (*down R.*) Poor little girl, and she's grown so pretty, too (*aloud*) I expect it's on account of the air. (NELLY *comes down*) The higher you go the purer it gets, you know; and Chris always was a deuce of a fellow for air. (*looks at ceiling*) He—he—lives on it. No—no—I don't mean that!

NELLY. (*coming down*) Poor Chris, what can have happened? I haven't seen him for two years. I've only just arrived from school in Paris, Whimper, our manservant, met me at the station with a message that I was to wait for papa and mamma here. (*goes up L.*)

BELL. (*aside*) (*down R.*) Christopher's father coming to town. Now I see through it all. This pauper and attic business is got up especially for the *old man's* benefit. (*aloud to NELLY, who ruefully examines the shabby furniture*) I wouldn't let the sight of this place distress me if I were you. We bachelors don't go in for frivolous embellishments. Solid comfort is all we care about.

NELLY. (*looks round*) Poor Chris, I wish I knew what to do.

BELL. (*aside, L.*) She doesn't like the idea of meeting him before me. I hate to leave her, and yet it's the only respectable course. (*crosses*) (*aloud*) (*taking hat*) If you don't mind, Miss Jedbury, I'll run away. I really have a most pressing appointment. You're sure you don't mind. Good-bye!

NELLY. (*relieved*) Oh, thank you so much—I mean good-bye! (*follows him*) Good-bye! (*left at door, L.*)

Exit BELLABY.

NELLY. How nice of him to go! I know I shall give way when Christopher comes, and I couldn't have done it com-

fortably before a third person—especially such a good-looking third person. I hope papa has sent him an invitation to my ball. Oh! look at those dreadful curtains. And the carpet—(*goes R., beginning to cry*) Oh dear, I never felt so miserable in all my life. (*stands before open door, R.*) That's the bedroom, I suppose. (*looks in*) A cracked looking-glass! and what a bed! Covered with boots and shoes! Well, I can at least put things tidy for the poor fellow. (*exit into room, R., and shuts door*)

Enter JOB door L.; he carries a quantity of JED's wearing apparel.

JOB. (*crosses behind table*) Here's the clothes! Where to put 'em is the next thing. There ain't a wardrobe or a cupboard on the blessed floor. (*throws clothes on sofa R.*) (*looks round despondently*) To think that Mr. Christopher should have come down to this! I mean up to this! (*JED. sings off L.*) (*listens*) Ah, there he comes! And singing as light-hearted as a baby.

JED. BURY'S voice gets nearer and he presently enters, L., carrying a large sponge bath, in which are syphons of soda and a demijohn; he also carries a bundle under his arm.

JED. J. (L.C.) I thought I told you to take a holiday!

JOB. I'm going, sir, as soon as I can get things straight.

JED. J. Well lend a hand with this, and then scoot. (*puts the bundle on table*)

JOB. (*taking hold of bath*) Where are we going to put it, sir? There ain't another inch of room in there. (*points R.*)

JED. J. (*going to window*) Put it on the leads. (*JOB prepares to obey*) Here! hold on—leave the liquid! (*takes demijohn and syphon out and stands them on sideboard*) (*JOB takes bath, gets out of the window and disappears*) (C.) Great institution the leads! They hold such a lot of things! I must get rid of Job, for if my respected Dad found out that I kept a valet, it would be all up with me. (*surveying room*) Moving up into this garret was a brilliant idea. A few more like that would make my fortune. The Guv'nor thinks I am dwelling in gilded splendour at his expense. He comes—beholds Mrs. Spriggs's sky parlour—(*JOB re-enters through window*)—and tableau! (*goes, L.*) Yes, I think I can safely predict—tableau! A parent who wouldn't be melted at the sight of this luxury would be tough indeed!

JOB. (*coming down to sofa, R.*) Where are these clothes to go, sir?

JED. J. On the leads.

JOB. But it's going to rain.

JED. J. Then leave them. I'll find a place. (*looks at watch*) Eleven o'clock! (*aside*) By Jove, the Guv'nor will be here presently. (*aloud*) Job, you really *must* get out into the fresh air. You're not looking well. (*up to him and away, L.*)

JOB. Where shall I go, sir?

JED. J. Oh, on the leads—er—somewhere to liven you up. How about Westminster Abbey or Kensal Green?

JOB. (*picking up board*) What about this shelf, sir?

JED. J. I'll fix that! (*JOB smiles*) What are you laughing at?

JOB. At the thought of you sir, a-wielding of a 'ammer.

JED. J. Don't you drop your h's, Job.

JOB. And don't you drop the 'ammer, sir. It's very 'eavy.

JED. J. (*takes bundle from table; unrolls and displays a torn and dilapidated coat*) What do you think of *that*, Job?

JOB. What's it for, sir?

JED. J. What's it for? What are coats usually for? Help me on! (*JOB obeys; puts other coat on chair by table*) Might have been made for me. Gave a beggar chap ten shillings for it just now. He's going to retire and live on the interest.

JOB. I wouldn't call it a bargain, sir.

JED. J. That's because you don't know a bargain when you see one. (*walks to sideboard*) A man must dress up to his (*takes up teapot, the spout of which is broken*) teapot. (*listens*) Hark! Job! you really are extremely pale, and must go home at once. (*turns him L.*)

JOB. You'll never be able to manage it, sir, by yourself.

JED. J. (*hustling him off L.*) I insist.

JOB exits L. and JED. J. closes the door after him.

JED. J. (*takes off ragged jacket and throws it on sofa*) Now, let me inspect the apartments. (*looking up*) H'm, ought to be plenty of ventilation. (*rocks table*) Ah, ricketty, that's the style! (*crosses to upper R., picks up hammer, knocks nail in wall, hangs up one of the coats brought in by JOB*) What evil luck could bring my dad to town just now, when he hasn't set foot out of Devonshire for over a year? (*drives another nail and hangs another garment*). Well, if I don't turn his visit to good account I'm not Jedbury Junior. (*drives another nail along the wall and hangs another coat*) And now to spread my frugal repast. (*gets cloth from sideboard L.*) A little too clean to appeal to the emotions, but here's a stunning hole, we'll turn that

to the front. (*spreads cloth*) I ought to have some bread and butter. No, no butter, butter betokens affluence. Bread! Just plain last month's bread! And a red herring! That herring idea was an inspiration! I told the landlady to send out for one! There is no such sign of abject poverty as a red herring! (*gets cup, saucer and teapot*) That's a good old family relic, I'll be bound! Shouldn't like to be responsible for all the scandal *that's* heard! (*referring to teapot*) Ah! (*gets bowl*) here is some nice, soft, sandy looking sugar! That's good! (*knock at door L.*) Not at home! (*pauses*) Perhaps it's the red herring! (*goes to door as if to speak to someone departing*) Here, hold on. (*goes out*)

Enter NELLY from R.; she carries a torn patchwork counterpane.

NELLY. His counterpane! I'd mend it if I could find a needle! (*remains at open door R., examining counterpane*)

JED. J. (*outside*) Oh, yes, one will be quite enough (*re-enters R., carrying a large loaf and a herring in a piece of paper; he turns and sees NELLY; they stand for a moment on the opposite thresholds, looking at one another, then NELLY bursts out crying, shouts "Chris!" and runs as he advances, and throws her arms about his neck; drops counterpane by R.D.*

NELLY. Chris, my poor Chris!

JED. J. By Jove, it's our Nell come home from school! Here, Nelly, hold up. You're crying all over the herring, and it's been salted once.

NELLY. I couldn't help it, Chris, I am so unhappy.

JED. J. What about?

NELLY. (*astonished*) What about?

JED. J. (*following her glance*) Oh, these quarters. Well, they're not altogether eighteen carat, what of that? (*places parcels on table and puts on coat which he wore at his first entrance.*

NELLY. You brave boy! (*goes up and lifts counterpane*)

JED. J. (*aside*) Now, for the first time I feel like a scoundrel. I consider it a meritorious action to deceive the Guv'nor, but it's an outrage on Nelly.

NELLY. (*coming R.C.*) Chris, won't you tell me how it has all happened?

JED. J. Why, of course I will. But first, let's have a look at you. (*turning her round*) Quite a little Parisienne, I declare. Well, you've taken me by surprise, Nelly, but it's better than not taking me at all.

NELLY. Surprise! Then Mamma didn't write you that I was to meet them here?

JED. J. Them? So Mamma's coming too, eh? Well, I might as well take the whole dose at once.

NELLY. Then it is as I expected. You've had *another* quarrel with Papa.

JED. J. (L.C.) Not another! Only a continuation of the same old original row! (*taking her hand*) Nelly, you are not a child now, and you can understand. Christopher, junior, *is* and *has been* a pretty bad case, but Christopher, senior, has never done the square thing, upon my honour. The fact is, Nelly—

NELLY. Excuse me, Chris, but I decline to hear another syllable till you have eaten your breakfast. (*goes to table*) Shall I pour you out a cup of tea?

JED. J. (*quickly following*) No—no—you don't understand that teapot! I've some new photographs over there—amateur theatricals, you know—go and have a look at 'em.

NELLY. Oh, yes! (*she goes to mantel and examines photos*)

JED. J. (*he opens lid of teapot*) (*aside*) Empty! I forgot all about the tea. Well, I hate tea, anyhow. I know what I should like though. (*looks towards sideboard and then at teapot*) By Jove, that's a brilliant idea. (*sees that her attention is attracted by photos—goes to sideboard, pours some brandy into teapot, and then squirts some soda from syphon in, watching NELLY all the time*) (*noise of syphon is NELLY'S cue to speak*)

NELLY. (*examining photos*) What is this, Chris?

JED. J. (*absently*) That's tea.

NELLY. Eh?

JED. J. Yes, T for Tom, you know. Thomas à Becket. In the play.

NELLY. I didn't know that Thomas à Becket wore a powdered wig.

JED. J. (*coming down with teapot*) Not that one—the other fellow at the corner. (*pours out a cup of soda and brandy and drinks it*)

NELLY. Oh, how funny you look in this one. (*laughs*) (*shows it*)

JED. J. *Hamlet!* Yes, I *was* funny in that!

NELLY. (*going up R. and glancing at books*) I am very glad to know that you keep up your reading.

JED. J. (*rushing up; uneasily*) Don't touch those. You won't understand them! (*taking her away*) They're Chinese.

NELLY. Chinese! How clever you must be! (*crosses in front to table L*) Chris, I think I'll have a cup of tea.

JED. J. No, don't. You wouldn't enjoy it, it's cold! (*B. of table*)

NELLY. (*L. of table; putting her hand on teapot*) So it is; just as cold as a stone.

JED. J. Yes, I like it like that.

NELLY. Well, sit down to your breakfast and I'll sit opposite and talk to you while you eat. (*she sits and he looks hopeless*)

JED. J. The fact is, I'm not hungry just now. Really I—

NELLY. I insist! If you don't I will go away this moment and wait in the street. (*he sighs and sits into chair*) Now I will cut the bread for you (*pausing with loaf*) I suppose you have grown to like it thick *these days*.

JED. J. Not too thick. (*watches her measure about a third of loaf*)

NELLY. Well, medium then. (*cuts three-inch slice and gives it*)

JED. J. (*aside*) That is what she calls medium. (*makes pretence of eating*)

NELLY. Here is a fork for your fish.

JED. J. Thanks awfully! (*eats some of herring, then secretes small portion behind chair; aside*) Oh, for a friendly feline puss, puss! Why did I discourage that cat's advances? (*takes a drink; eats*)

NELLY. (*seeing him eat*) That is better. Now tell me, how did you come to this state of insolvency?

JED. J. (*carelessly*) Oh, by degrees. I have never been able to keep out of debt on Dad's allowance, and instead of permitting me to augment that allowance by going into business he has always insisted on a profession. (*rises and goes* NELLY rises.) But come, Nell, cheer up, that long face does not sit well on a débutante. By the bye, when is the flare up? (*swings her round*)

NELLY (*crosses to R.C.*) My dance? Next Wednesday. You are coming down? (*with animation; he shakes his head*) But you *must*, if it is only to meet Dora.

JED. J. Dora? And who is Dora?

NELLY. (*rapturously*) A darling!

JED. J. Really!

NELLY. Chris, I want you to fall desperately in love with her.

JED. J. H'm! What's she like?

NELLY. Oh, very clever. Not a bit like me—quite superior!

JED. J. (*aside*) That lets me out! She's safe!

NELLY. She's quite old.

JED. J. (*uninterested*) Ah!

NELLY. Almost twenty-one.

JED. J. (*interested*) Oh! And what would such an aged person be doing in a convent school?

NELLY. Studying special branches. Yes, she has made up her mind to become a nun. Chris, I feel sure she has a history—a past, you know.

JED. J. (*with mock seriousness*) No? (*aside, L.C.*) Blue spectacles and a broken heart. (*aloud*) Well, if I'm invited, I'll run down to see the last of a certain jolly little girl (*embraces her*) who is going to degenerate into a society lady. (*looks at watch*) What time did you expect to be called for?

NELLY. Mamma said about twelve.

JED. J. And Dad said about eleven. Well, *that* is as near as they ever agree about *anything*.

NELLY. Do they still go for weeks without speaking to one another except through Whimper?

JED. J. I imagine so.

MRS. GLIBB (*off*) George, these stairs!

JED. J. Hush—here they are.

NELLY. (*going to door L. and listening*) No, it isn't Mamma and Papa, for they are talking quite *amiably*.

MRS. G. (*outside*) But, George! it cannot be so far up?

JED. J. Confound it, it's the Glibbs.

NELLY. Who are the Glibbs?

JED. J. (R.C.) Mrs. Glibb is the founder of the Anti-Pitch and Toss Society.

NELLY. And Mr. Glibb?

JED. J. Mr. Glibb—Oh, well, he's just Mrs. Glibb's husband. (*knock at door*; JED. J. *puts finger on his lips*; NELLY *goes up and round to R.*)

MRS. G. (*puts her head in door L.*) Mr. Jedbury

JED. J. (*aloud*) Not at home!

Enter MRS. GLIBB, followed by MR. GLIBB.

JED. J. (*crosses with pretended astonishment*) Ah! how do do? Delighted! I said, "Not at home," didn't I? Absurd habit of mine! Always say, "Not at home" when I mean "Come in." (*is shaking hands all the time with GLIBB, who is perfectly apathetic*) Permit me, my sister Nelly—Mr. and Mrs. Glibb. This is Mr. Glibb. (GLIBB *releases himself and sits on stool at side of table L.*)

MRS. G. (R.C.) (*crossing there*) Delighted! Have heard about you from your dear mother. (*shakes NELLY's hand; effusively to GLIBB*) George, Miss Jedbury, Christopher's sister. (*he slowly nods*) Pardon the familiarity, Miss Nelly, but while in town I have been endeavouring to act a mother's part to your naughty brother, and Mr. Glibb (*looking at him for corroboration*) takes the most vivid interest in the rogue.

GLIBB's countenance must be absolutely devoid of expression now and through the entire play.

NELLY. (C.) It is very kind of him.

MRS. G. It is. But he is so energetic. Christopher ! (*looks round*) Surely these are not the apartments we visited before ?

JED. J. (L.C.) (*aside*) Damn it ; she'll spoil everything. (*aloud*) Oh yes ! They've shrunk a bit in the cleaning, but they're the same.

MRS. G. We had no idea it was so far up.

JED. J. Ah ! you must have judged by the *going down*. It isn't half so far going down. (*aside to NELLY*) Don't take any notice of her. No memory — *drinks* !

MRS. G. And where is your grand piano ? (*looking at GLIBB*) It was a grand, was it not, George ? (GLIBB *slowly opens his mouth as if to speak*) Ah, I thought so ! (*aside to NELLY, in lowered voice*) Mr. Glibb is always the personification of accuracy. (GLIBB *begins his business slowly*) But the piano, where is it gone ? Don't tell me you've lent it to a friend, you reckless boy. (*to NELLY*) He has absolutely no idea of the value of money. (*during following dialogue GLIBB absently pours out liquid from teapot into cup ; CHRISTOPHER tries to catch his eye, and looks appealingly at him, but he sips and then drinks the cupful down with a perfectly stolid countenance. CHRISTOPHER draws a long sigh of relief—this business must not be hurried*) Ten pounds, my dear, for wax dolls to give to the bootblacks' sisters at our last annual excursion—Mr. Glibb was compelled to lecture him severely. (*goes to mantel and examines photos*) An excellent picture ! Full of force. (*puts the photo down*) And that brings me to the object of our visit. (*comes down, R.C.*) Mr. Glibb is dying to know if you wont give us a recitation in character—something funny, you know—at our recital for butchers' boys.

JED. J. With pleasure.

MRS. G. (*tapping him on shoulder*) Good boy ! (*to NELLY*) To eradicate the gambling instinct, it is necessary to supply the infant mind with constant diversion. You must join our association. (*crosses to L.C.*) Now, Christopher, we are going to take one turn round the park, and Mr. Glibb thinks we might persuade your sister to accompany us. She shall be restored to you in an hour.

NELLY. Thank you very much.

MRS. G. (*crossing L.C.*) Then come along ; George, are you quite ready ? (*aside to NELLY, who crosses L., in lowered voice*) I should like you to become better acquainted with Mr. Glibb. He's a wonderful man ! Au revoir, Christopher. We will take good care of your sister. Come, George !

GLIBB rises ; MRS. GLIBB takes NELLY'S arm and exits

L. ; GLIBB follows to door and then pauses, opens his mouth as if to speak to JEDBURY JUNIOR, when MRS. GLIBB's voice is heard again outside.

MRS. G. (*outside*) George ! (GLIBB subsides and goes quietly off)

JED. J. Ha, Ha ! Mr. Glibb is quite garrulous this morning. He coughed once, and I caught him elevating his eyebrows on two distinct occasions. (*closes door*) (*going c. ; feeling his chin*) Hang it all, Job forgot to shave me ! Why isn't a fellow taught to shave at school ? He might practise on the masters. Well, if things continue at this downhill pace I shall have to study the art, so I might as well begin at once. (*going to bedroom R.*) I think I'd better shut the door, for if I were disturbed it might be fatal. (*takes torn coat and exits into bedroom, shutting door*)

After slight pause a knock on door L., followed by the entrance of CHRISTOPHER JEDBURY SENIOR, MRS. JEDBURY and WHIMPER ; the latter carries MR. JEDBURY'S stick in one hand and MRS. JEDBURY'S parasol in the other ; JEDBURY looks round the room, then walks across to R.C. ; WHIMPER takes up his position in the middle, and MRS. JEDBURY sits L.

MRS. J. (*hysterically*) What a barbarous apartment !

JED. S. (R.) Whimper !

WHIM. (*respectfully but without the slightest inflection of voice*) Yes, sir ?

JED. S. My compliments to your mistress, and if she doesn't like the apartment she can get out of it.

WHIM. (*without moving*) Yes, sir. (*now turns his head to MRS. J. and gives the least cough*) Mr. Jedbury suggests, madam, that it would be more comfortable to you to remain below in the carriage.

MRS. J. Let your master know that my remarks were not addressed to him.

WHIM. Yes, Ma'am. (*moving only his head and giving the same introductory cough*) (*To JEDBURY SENIOR*) Madam is content to remain for the present. (*remains immovable*)

JED. S. (*walking to L. and back again*) A pretty state of affairs for my son. Absolute pauperdom ! I suppose he thinks that the knowledge of his condition will soften my resolution. The spendthrift will find that he is mistaken.

MRS. J. (*sitting R. of table*) I regret that I directed my daughter here, amid such squalor. (*turns face L. ; sees herring, bus.*)

JED. S. (R.C.) Whimper !

WHIM. Yes, sir.

JED S. You can remind your mistress that what is good enough for my son is good enough for her daughter.

MRS. J. Whimper!

WHIM. Yes, ma'am?

MRS. J. If your master wishes to openly insult me, pray don't let him restrain himself on my account. (*a scream heard from inside of bedroom*) Whimper! There is a tragedy being perpetrated in that room. Give me my parasol. (*he obeys*)

JED S. Whimper, come with me. (*they all approach door*—JEDBURY, WHIMPER is in the middle, MRS JEDEURY.

JED J. comes out without his coat and a gash on his chin from shaving. MRS. JEDEURY drops parasol and rushes at him; WHIMPER falls back to C., and JED. S. drops down R.)

MRS. J. Christopher, my son!

JED. J. (*falling on her shoulder*) Mother! (*aside*) Tableau! (*aloud*) Excuse me! (*darts into room and returns in torn coat, looking penitent*)

MRS. J. (*hysterically, L.C.*) My poor boy, I thought something fearful had occurred. Say, oh say, that you were not about to take your life.

JED. J. (R.C.) No, mother, I was trying to shave.

MRS. J. (*melodramatically*) Thank Heaven for that! (*crossing to L. chair*)

JED S. (R.) Whimper, tell your mistress not to make a fool of herself.

WHIM. Yes, sir. (*turns his head and coughs as before*)

MRS. J. Whimper, tell your master that I shouldn't dream of usurping his privilege.

JED. J. (*adjusting court plaster to his chin*) Nelly has been here, mother.

MRS. J. (*with dignity*) We met her on the stairs below,—the carpeted stairs, thank goodness! Mrs. Glibb has kindly consented to drop her at our hotel.

JED J. (C.) I regret, sir, that I am compelled to entertain you in such humble quarters, but circumstances (*displaying torn coat*) over which I have no control——

JED S. (R.) The circumstances don't appear to have got down to your boots yet.

JED. J. (*aside*) Duce take it, I forgot all about the boots! (*aloud*) It's a man's duty to keep up appearances, and though my clothes (*ostentatiously buttoning coat*) may look expensive they are not! I borrowed them from a friend.

JED S. (*pointing at those hanging on wall*) Those are *also* borrowed from a friend, eh?

JED J. (*turning*) Those? Oh, no. (*confused*) That's the stock!

JED S. The stock?

JED. J. Yes, I—I'm going into the business.

JED. S. Indeed! So you haven't disgraced me enough? Well, it is to discuss your future I am here.

JED. J. Delighted. (*mournfully*) Hope you'll stay a month or two. I mean an hour or two.

JED S. Ten minutes will be sufficient for the little I have to say, but that little I should prefer to say in private. (*looking pointedly at Mrs. JEDBURY*) In private! (*turns up R.*)

MRS. J. Whimper! (*crosses with dignity*) I have no wish to linger where I am not wanted.

Exit L., followed by WHIMPER at respectful distance, who leaves JEDBURY'S stick against chair by L.D.

JED. S. And now, sir? (*comes down L.*)

JED. J. (*aside*) It's coming! (*to him*) H'm—take a chair!

JED. S. (*sits L. by table*) I am a man of few words.

JED. J. Now I'm in for a synopsis of his entire career.

JED. S. At ten years of age—

JED. J. (*sitting R.C.*) I thought so.

JED. S. I had completed my school education.

JED. J. Yes, sir.

JED. S. At twenty I was a clerk in an East India House. At thirty I was a small trader on my own account.

JED. J. Yes, sir.

JED. S. At fifty I am a millionaire. Now, sir, by what means have I arrived at this pinnacle?

JED. J. I give it up.

JED. S. By planning a line of action and by following that line with industry and undeviating rule. I may say, sir, that in all my career I have never made a blunder.

JED. J. Indeed. I thought you were responsible for my existence.

JED. S. That is not the question. That you *are* a blunder is the disappointment of my life, for I looked, with my money and influence, to make an aristocrat and a gentleman of you.

JED. J. (*rising with impulsive anger*) In other words you wanted another background for your vanity. It was not a question of giving your son the benefits you had been denied, but it was, "My son is a gentleman. Who made him such? Christopher Jedbury, the trader. (*getting more angry*) My son is reading for the Bar, will in time become a judge—who has provided the money? Christopher Jedbury, the merchant!" Pah! (*goes up then down c.*) (*pause*) Forgive me, father, I lost my self-control.

JED. S. I was not aware you ever possessed any.

JED. J. (*quietly*) I know that I shall never be able to satisfy you in the way that you desire, but I have a business head and a honest desire to put my practicability to the test. Why not give me a trial?

JED. S. And your education may go to the winds. (*sneeringly*) Oh, certainly. Which do you prefer—the counting-house or the produce department? You forget, sir, that the first requisite of a business man is brains.

JED. J. And what proof have you that I *lack* brains?

JED. S. Your reckless extravagance.

Enter JOB L. ; he begins to remove things from table.

JED. J. (*seriously*) You started late in life to inculcate lessons of economy. You put me among a certain set. I did as I saw the others do. (*tries to catch JOB'S eye, but fails*)

JOB begins clearing table, putting things on sideboard at back.

JED. S. (*rises and goes L.*) Whom have we here? (*JOB comes C., carrying plates*)

JED. J. Oh, nobody in particular. (*aside*) Why the devil did you come back?

JOB. (*comes L C.*) I thought you was done, sir. I've been a'll over Westminster Abbey.

JED. S. Introduce us.

JED. J. Certainly (*aside*)—(*aloud*) Mr. Job!

JED. S. Job—Job what?

JED. J. (*aside*) Hanged if I know. (*to JOB*) What is your confounded name, besides Job?

JOB. Smith, sir. I—I'm very sorry, sir.

JED. J. Smith—of course! Smith—my father! My father—Smith. Smith and I are old chums. He comes in and out, and makes himself quite at home. Don't you Smith? (*thumps him on the back ; knife and fork fall*)

JED. S. Proud to know you. (*up to him*) You'll pardon the little tête-a-tête. (*extends his hand ; JOB retreats*)

JED. J. Oh, you needn't mind, Job—I mean Smith. We have no secrets. (*goes up C.*) (*aside*) Get out! (*watches JOB nervously till he exits into bedroom R.*)

JED. S. (*sits R. of table*) Well, to return to our subject. I was about to make you a proposition. I want you to marry. (*JED. J. looks up quickly*) Don't be in a hurry to decline. It is the only way to retrieve your social position and my good opinion. The lady is a niece of Major Hedway, a retired army officer, who has just purchased an interest in our Bombay house. This union will expand our resources and knit up our interests.

JED. J. (*sarcastically*) I see, you want to boom up the business.

JED. S. (*ignoring his tone*) The girl has a fortune in her own right. She talks about going into a convent, but she is young and impressionable, and will doubtless change her mind. Well, there is your chance. (*rises*) Win this young lady and you shall have fifty thousand pounds and your bills receipted on your wedding day. Take time to consider. Let me see—this is Tuesday, we return to Devonshire on Saturday. Suppose you run down for Nelly's ball next week. In case you wish to communicate with me before then, we are staying at the Burlington (*goes to L.D. and takes stick*) (JED. JUNIOR *bows*) And now I'll leave you to chew the cud of my advice, and I warn you—(*stick business*)—that your entire future as my son may depend on your decision.

JED. J. (*accompanying him to door L.*) You shall have an answer this day week without fail. (*bow from JED. SENIOR.*) (*exit JED. SENIOR*) Ah! It was the easiest way to get rid of him. Well, it only wanted this to make my collapse complete. (*walking to and fro*) Marry! How the deuce *could* I?—even if I *wanted to*! If I am not the most unfortunate dog that ever lived, I'll be hanged.

Enter BELLABY L.

BELL. (L.C.) Don't, old chap. Hanging is become so beastly common.

JED. J. (R.C.) (*seizing his hand abruptly*) By Jove, the very man I want.

BELL. What is it? A point on probate—libel—or (*looking at room*) sudden eviction?

JED. J. Tom, don't be flippant. I'm in a hole and want you to help me.

BELL. Professional job, eh! (*aside*) My first! (*to him*) I'm all attention. (*sits, L.*) (*hat bus.*) I'm all attention.

JED. J. (*sits, R.C.*) You remember, two years ago, my going on a voyage to Trinidad?

BELL. Yes, and I remember your coming back unexpectedly the next week. Climate too hot, wasn't it?

JED. J. Well—yes! The place did become rather warm. The fact is, I got into an awful scrape.

BELL. I guessed as much. Well?

JED. J. Well, on the trip out we had an *awful* passage and I kept my cabin till the night before we landed. Then, feeling like having a cigar, I strolled about on deck until the lights were out. I started on a voyage of discovery for my cabin. Finally I reached it, and seeing by a faint streak of moonlight a bundle in the lower berth, which I thought to

be my clothes laid out for packing, I just pulled my coat off and jumped into the upper berth. (*movement of BELL*) In two seconds I was sound asleep. I don't know how long I remained so, when the sound of a gentle undulating snore (*movement of BELLABY forward*) began to mix with my dreams. I did not recognise it as my own, and that awoke me.

BELL. And the snore?

JED. J. Went placidly on. I thought of the bundle in the lower berth and I struck a match. By its flickering light (*rises*) I saw a sight which seemed to paralyse my spinal column. Hanging on the door peg was a sort of bifurcated jacket, connected by a trellis work down the back.

BELL. You don't mean to say——

JED. J. Corsets; I do! Sit down! In a flash I was out of that berth, and with coat in hand was making a graceful exit.

BELL. By Jove! what a spree!

JED. J. Was it? The spree, as you call it, hadn't commenced. I opened the door and made a bolt.

BELL. Into your own cabin? (*rises*)

JED. J. No,—sit down (*puts him back*)—into the arms of an elderly military individual, who appeared to be doing the sentry act in front of the lady's cabin. I endeavoured to explain but as he had set his heart on my gore, there was nothing to do but to exchange cards, and trust in a just Heaven to kill the Colonel before the meeting came off.

BELL. And did the just Heaven come up to time?

JED. J. No, not a bit of it. I had been in Trinidad about two hours when I received a note from the Colonel. He had changed his mind about killing me. Instead, he intended to marry me.

BELL. Eh? (*attempts to rise*)

JED. J. (*pushing him back*) To his daughter Matilda; and don't keep bobbing about. He notified me that, notwithstanding his daughter's disinclination, nothing should prevent the ceremony from taking place in three days, and that if I premeditated escape I should be merely offering my carcase as a target for his men. Now, there was a peculiar circumstance about this note. He addressed me (*pauses embarrassed*)—well, not by my own name. I looked for an explanation.

BELL. Where?

JED. J. In my card case.

BELL. Oh, I see. You had given him someone else's card by mistake? (*rising*)

JED. J. H'm, yes! That's it—by mistake. (*aside*) I can't tell him that it was his own. (*aloud*) Oh, I acted in good faith, but you see it was in the dark. (*up to him*)

BELL. (*nudging him*) I say, what a joke on the other fellow!

JED. J. (*nudging back*) Capital, wasn't it.

BELL. By the bye, who was it? What was his name?

JED. J. Oh, yes, the name. Well, the name—the name—was Glibb.

BELL. Your talkative friend. (*laughing*) Great! And how did it come out?

JED. J. Well, the day came, and so did I, into the Colonel's quarters. Everything was in readiness. The old chaplain, who had evidently been squared, was flanked, so to speak, by four soldiers, who stood at attention with drawn bayonets by way of encouraging me. Here were the bayonets, here was I.

BELL. What did you do?

JED. J. Do? I married Matilda.

BELL. And she?

JED. J. Thoroughly prostrated by the situation lay indisposed in an adjoining room.

BELL. And you never saw her?

JED. J. Never set eyes on her.

BELL. Then how could you——?

JED. J. Well, the girl signed her part of the contract, and the same witnesses brought it to me.

BELL. And you signed? (JED. J. *nods*—BELL. *nudges him*) The other fellow's name?

JED. J. (*returning nudge*) Yes, the other fellow's name. The ceremony concluded, I was told I could go, as my father-in-law had no further use for me.

BELL. And you returned home?

JED. J. Just as soon as I could. Now, Tom, you are the only soul outside the contracting parties who knows anything of this ridiculous affair. What I want to know is, am I married, or am I not? There are numerous reasons why I must be single.

BELL. You're in love? (L.)

JED. J. Wrong! I'm in debt! And my father suggests (BELL. *places chair by table*) that I shall (*pantomimes*) knit up his interests and expand his resources. Now, when I decline to marry the lady he has selected, I shall be shown the door, and, Tom, I can't start life on my own account with this Damoclean sword hanging over me. (*goes to him*) So, for the love of Heaven, prove this marriage void, or kill Matilda. (*goes c*)

BELL. All right, old man, I'll hunt up the law. By the bye, what was the tyrant's name?

JED. J. (c.) What—the old father. Dwyer—Colonel

Richard Dwyer. (*produces pocket book*) Here's his blood-thirsty card. Take it.

BELL. I'll drop you a line on Monday. (*moves to D.L.*)

JED. J. Then you'd better send to Devonshire.

BELL. Devonshire?

JED. J. (*herring business*) I'm going home for the festivities. (*going over to door L.*) I'll come downstairs with you. They are wretched stairs, and I don't want you to break your neck—at least before Monday. (*exit L., followed by BELLABY*)

Enter JOB R. ; he carries a pair of muddy boots and boot brushes.

JOR. (*disconsolately*) I wonder how long this attic business is going to last. It ain't fit for the gentleman's gentleman, let alone for the gentleman himself. (*begins brushing boots ; then stops*) Better clean 'em outside, for fear the dust should get on the droring room furniture. (*disappears through window*)

Knock at door L., followed by entrance of DORA ; she is dressed in light grey, and carries a purse in her hand.

DORA. (*up L.C. front table*) These can't be his rooms. Yet Nelly certainly got out at this house when we drove up from the station, and I've tried all the other floors. I should have asked those two young men I met on the stairs, but when a gentleman in a dilapidated coat is heaping curses on the head of all things feminine, especially marriageable things, it is an ill-chosen moment for a timid female to ask a favour. In the meantime what am I to do about Nelly's purse? I don't wonder that she left it in the cab, she was so excited about meeting her brother again. (*gets book from sideboard ; reads inside*) "Christopher Jedbury Junior." Then it is right. (*business with poker chips and cards ; takes up race card*) Newmarket! (*puts card down ; goes to table*) What an extraordinary place. I suppose I'd better wait. I wonder if I might help myself to a cup of tea? (*pours from teapot into cup*) I am just dying of thirst. (*tastes and put cup down*) Tea! So this is a sample of "dear brother Chris," (*crosses c.*) the hero that Nelly has set up for me to worship! (*smiles*) Forewarned—forearmed! Why, there is another door. Then probably this is only the kitchen. (*goes to door R. and knocks ; then opens and goes in*)

Enter JEDBURY JUNIOR, L.

JED. J. Phew! I've got that much off my mind, at any rate. (*Crosses to R.C. and picks up second bracket which he affixes to wall*) This morning I said to myself (*looks round*)

where is that hammer? (*finds it*) I said to myself—a visit from my Guv'nor, and after that the Deluge! (*pause*) Yet the Deluge wasn't altogether the end of things. If I remember rightly, it was only the beginning. (*drops nail*) Where the deuce did that go to? (*looks along floor*) After the Deluge a grey dove came forth (*enter DORA R. unperceived*) who—(*still looking for nail—gets close to DORA and sees her skirt; his eye gradually travels up—he starts*) History is repeating itself.

DORA (*a little C.*) I beg your pardon. I wish to see Mr. Jedbury.

JED. J. (*looking confusedly at his shabby coat*) Not at home. Not at home. (*aside*) Who is she?

DORA. I'm sorry for that. Perhaps I might wait.

JED. J. (*more confused*) Oh, there's no knowing when he'll be in. He's erratic.

DORA. But he lives here?

JED. J. Well, er—yes. To a certain extent.

DORA. I see. He stays here with you?

JED. J. Yes, that's it. We—share and share alike.

DORA. I've no doubt you can give me the information I require. I wish to know at which hotel Mr. Jedbury's people are staying.

JED. J. At the—at the Burlington.

DORA. Thank you. (*crosses, L.*) I am sorry to have troubled you. (*goes to door, L.*)

JED. J. Don't mention it. I—I—will you leave your name?

DORA. (*smiling*) Mr. Jedbury would not be any the wiser, I assure you. Good morning.

JED. J. Good morning!

DORA. The Burlington, I think you said?

JED. J. The Burlington.

DORA. Good morning! (*exit, L.*) (JED. J. *remains staring at the door*)

JED. J. "And the dove went from the Ark and returned not again." I wonder whether Noah ever came across that dove when he got on dry land. (*sinks in chair L. of table and watches where DORA went off*)

MEDIUM CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A corner of the hall in JEDBURY SENIOR'S house in Devonshire; door at back R., and French window (practicable) L.C.; staircase to archway up R.; entrance L.I.E.*

As curtain rises enter FOOTMAN L.I.E.; he arranges table and two chairs L.; MAJOR HE WAY enters R.U.E., followed by WHIMPER; the MAJOR is about sixty-five years old, but brisk and hearty in his manner; his dress is extremely juvenile, and somewhat dandified; he might have the least suspicion of an Irish accent.

MAJOR. Finished dinner, Whimper?

WHIMP. (R.C.) Yes, sir. Coffee will be served here, sir. If you'll kindly take a seat, sir.

MAJOR. (R.C.) Very good. Are we the first?

WHIMP. Yes, sir. (WHIMPER pins red flower in the MAJOR'S coat)

MAJOR. What's become of my niece, Miss Dora?

WHIMP. She went up to see Miss Jedbury in her room, sir.

MAJOR. Are you expecting many ladies this evening, Whimper?

WHIMP. A good many young ladies, sir. (slightly up stage L.C.)

MAJOR. Really! Really! (turning) How is my coat?

WHIMP. (coming down and arranging his coat) A little—that's all right, sir.

MAJOR. No crease?

WHIMP. None, sir.

MAJOR. (R.) A man approaching the prime of life cannot be too particular about creases, whether they are in his coat, or his constitution. Do you play chess, Whimper?

WHIMP. No, sir; but draughts is a game—

MAJOR. Draughts be damned.

WHIMP. Yes, sir.

MAJOR. Now chess stimulates the mental faculties.

WHIMP. (respectfully withdrawing) Anything more, sir?

MAJOR. Yes. It renews the exhausted vitality. Look at me! Who would believe that I was forty last birthday?

WHIMP. (on a level with MAJOR—after pause) Nobody, sir.

MAJOR. (up to him confidentially) The recipe is a secret, but I'll give it to you. A twenty minutes' sleep to be taken twice a day after meals, and a faithful application to the game of chess. Don't forget that, Whimper! (down R.)

WHIMP. No, sir. (exit C. to R. after waiting for JED. SEN.)

Enter CHRISTOPHER JEDBURY SENIOR, C. *from R.*

JED. S. Ah, Major, as punctual as ever—always the first, eh?

MAJOR. You forget I am a military man. (*shakes hands heartily*)

JED. S. Say rather that you were a military man, for your signature to those papers has transformed you into an East India merchant.

MAJOR. All owing to the contemptible ingratitude of the nation that puts a young and able-bodied man on the retired list.

JED. S. The nation's loss is *my* gain, Major. Your influence with the Rajahs will double our Bombay profits in a year.

MAJOR. I wouldn't be too sure of that. (*laughs*) There was never a Hedway yet that knew enough about business to get change for a shilling -- unless it was the *Queen's* shilling. (*sits on seat R. of stairs*)

JED. S. Well, it is *my* risk. And as for you, *man* must have an occupation, if only to keep him out of mischief.

MAJOR. (*nodding*) And my liver won't let me exist out of India.

JED. S. Your niece talks of remaining behind, I understand.

MAJOR. Yes, Dora's got her mind fixed on a convent. (*laughs*) A convent! It's enough to make the dead and gone Hedways come out of their graves! (*rises*) She says she wants tranquillity. Now, if she would only learn chess—you play chess, Jedbury? (*crosses L.*)

JED. S. A very little. (*voices off*) Here are the ladies. This is the only corner of the house left us, Major. Everywhere else is given to Nelly and her young folks. (*looks at watch*) We've just time for a cup of coffee in peace and quiet. (*crosses L.*)

Enter MRS. JEDBURY and MRS. GLIBB, R.U.E. ; *they are chatting* ; MR. GLIBB *follows.*

MRS. J. (*shaking hands*) Welcome to Devonshire, Major. (*turning*) Our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Glibb, Major Hedway. (*she goes up back and drops down to sit head of table after GLIBB is seated L.*)

Positions :—MRS. JEDBURY, R.C. ; MRS. GLIBB, C. ; MR. GLIBB, L.C.

GLIBB *comes forward as if to shake hands, but* MRS. GLIBB *steps in front of him, and he goes to his seat, extreme L.*

MRS. G. Delighted! So good of Mrs. Jedbury to invite us. Mr. Glibb will be enchanted to know you. He takes such an interest in the militia. (*lowering her voice*) Nature intended Mr. Glibb for a soldier—a leader of nations—but unfortunately he met me (*sighs*)

MAJOR. And surrendered. (*gallantly*) Sure, it's no wonder. (*they sit—MRS. G. R. of stairs, MAJOR on her left*)

Enter WHIMPER with coffee.

MRS. J. Will you have some coffee, Mrs. Glibb?

MRS. G. Thank you. (*to GLIBB who is about to take cup from WHIMPER*) George, you had better not take any. It makes him so excitable. (*WHIMPER crosses R. to MRS. G.; MAJOR and JED. S. R.*)

JED. S. (*on chair L. of stairs—tasting coffee and turning to GLIBB*) This is something peculiarly fine; I import it myself from Java. (*GLIBB looks longingly at JED. S.'s cup; MRS. G. converses inaudibly with the MAJOR while JED. S. continues to address GLIBB*) Ah, my dear Glibb, you are not in business, I believe? (*GLIBB shakes his head and prepares to speak*) An arduous life, sir, and one which makes great demands on the intellectual faculties. The reward comes when a man can lean back—(*leans back*)—in his chair and survey the result of his own unaided efforts. (*tastes coffee. WHIMPER at table L.*) Whimper, (*rises*) my compliments to your mistress, and I am accustomed to take sugar in my coffee. (*hands cup to WHIMPER and goes up at back; WHIMPER is at table*)

MRS. J. Whimper! (*WHIMPER crosses R.*) Your master has already had three lumps. If he chooses to ruin his digestion it is no affair of mine. (*crosses R. and sits L. of stairs; WHIMPER carries it to JED. S., who signs to him to put it on table; JEDBURY then absently hands sugar to GLIBB, who, having no coffee, quietly takes sugar and eats it.*)

MRS. G. Then you have never entered the matrimonial field, Major?

MAJOR. No, that is the only engagement I ever ran away from. Woman is man's natural born enemy.

MRS. J. But you've been told to love your enemy, Major.

JED. S. Bah!

MAJOR. True, and as a God-fearing man, I've—I've done it. It has been at once my pain and my delight to love them *all*—at a distance.

MRS. G. But it was your duty to make a choice.

MAJOR. What—and slight all the others?

MRS. J. Ah, Major Hedway, you've never been under fire.

MAJOR. Indeed I have, but after taking an inventory of my wounds I have always come to the conclusion that dis-

cretion is the better part of valour. (WHIMPER *exits quietly through door R.U.E.*) Ah, ah! Allow me! (*rises and crosses to table L. with MRS. G.'s cup*)

MRS. G. Indeed. Quite a character, and I adore character. Major Hedway, you must positively come to our next theatrical performance.

MAJOR. Delighted. (*comes c.*)

MRS. J. They're making quite a stir in the dramatic world.

MAJOR. Ah! Indeed.

MRS. G. Now, Major! (*taps him with fan*) Only yesterday (*going up to MRS. J.*) the committee waited on Mr. Glibb in a body and implored him, positively *implored* him, to forsake the amateur for the professional stage.

MAJOR. God bless me!

MRS. G. He expostulated with them for two hours. (*appealing to GLIBB*) It must have been quite two hours, George? (GLIBB *prepares to speak*) Yes, I thought so. And in spite of all his arguments they would *not* take *no* for an answer.

MAJOR. H'm!

MRS. J. It was very flattering. (*rises, crosses down R., puts cup on mantel*)

MRS. G. Mr. Glibb's *own* remark. It *was* flattering. (*crosses L. to MAJOR*) Major Hedway, I should like you to become better acquainted with Mr. Glibb. (*impressively*) He's a wonderful man.

MRS. J. (*going up*) Major, (*crosses to R.C.*) will you take Mrs. Glibb to the ball room? I must look after the young people. (*exit R.U.E.*)

MAJOR. (*aside, looking at GLIBB*) I wonder if the mummy will offer any objection!

MRS. G. (*c.*) Ready, Major. (*turning, he turns towards stairs and offers his arm*) Don't you trouble to come, George. (*to the MAJOR*) He has such a highly strung temperament, that I am compelled to curb his activity.

Enter WHIMPER C., goes to JED. S., takes cup, crosses to table R., takes it off C.; MAJOR and MRS. G. exit up stage.

JED. S. (*rises—to GLIBB*) A man of great nerve, the Major. (GLIBB, *sugar business*) Well connected, too. Lived in India all his life. Most of the native princes are friends of his. (*both exit R.U.E.*)

WHIMPER. Well, if the Major's the result of chess, draughts is good enough for me.

Enter JED. J. through archway C.R.; he is vainly struggling to fix his white tie; one end is much longer than the other, and the bow sticks under his chin.

JED. J. (*excitedly*) Not a sign of a letter from Tom, and I've ruined myself in telegrams. If he hasn't found anything out, why the deuce couldn't he wire and say so? (*pulling at tie*) I knew it, and this is the last one. I've ruined three. I've a good mind to put my pocket handkerchief round my neck. How does Job manage these things? I might as well be on a desert island for all the assistance I shall find here. (*tears tie off*) Confound the thing! (*throws it on the floor*)

Enter DORA, R.U.E.

DORA. (L.C., *gently*) No, don't do that! Let me tie it for you.

JED. J. (R.C., *aside*) The grey dove in pink plumage!

DORA. (L.C., *aside*) Young Mr. Jedbury's eccentric friend. (*both stoop for the tie and knock their heads together*)

JED. J. I beg ten thousand pardons (*both hold tie*)

DORA. One will do. (*smiles*) I've had harder knocks than that. (*puts fan and handkerchief on chair L. of stairs; slips tie away from him; taking tie*) Hold up your chin. (*DORA puts tie round his neck*)

JED. J. But I couldn't think of— (*turns his head away*)

DORA. (*impatiently jerking his head round*) Oh yes, you could.

JED. J. But really I— (*turning his head away*) Who the deuce—?

DORA. If you don't want to be strangled you had better keep still. (*arranges tie*)

JED. J. (*aside*) Who on earth can she be? (*DORA jerks his head round and he remains gazing at her till she has finished*)

DORA. There, I think that will do. (*steps back and goes up a little*)

JED. J. I'm sure it will, beautifully. (*aside*) I wish I could get it undone again. (*crosses L. aloud*) If it wouldn't be troubling you too much, you might tighten this wobbly-wobbly bit. (*DORA does so*)

DORA. There. (*going*) Now, remember, the next time you have any differences of opinion with a white tie you must exercise a little patience, and don't "confound the thing," for I may not be by to settle your difficulties. Good bye. (*picks up fan and leaves her handkerchief without noticing and exits R.*)

JED. J. (*looking after her*) She's gone, confound it! Who is she? She's an apparition—must be. Now you see her, now you don't. Yes, she's a vision—a vision of loveliness. Hello! (*picks up handkerchief*) A spiritual pocket-handkerchief. (*looks at corner*) "D.H." Now what does "D.H." stand for? Dark horse—dead heat—damned hurry—that fits

her best. I wonder if I could improve the acquaintance? (*sighing*) Perhaps Matilda wouldn't like it. (*enter NELLY, R.U.E. ; puts handkerchief in pocket*) Why haven't I heard from Tom?

NELLY. (R.C.) Hallo! Chris!

JED. J. Nell, has Tom Bellaby turned up yet?

NELLY. (*pouting*) No; and I think it's very rude of him to be so late. (*crosses to stairs*)

JED. J. Of course it is. He's a scoundrel of the first order. He promised to write to me, here, on a matter of the utmost importance. Nelly, are you quite sure there was no letter for me yesterday?

NELLY. (*shaking her head*) Quite sure. I should have seen it.

JED. J. Nelly, who is the pink girl? (BOTH *by stairs*)

NELLY. What is she like?

JED. J. Don't ask me, Nell. She's a sort of angelic ghost. (*goes L.C.*)

NELLY. The description is too vague. (*going to him*) Remember you have promised to make yourself agreeable to my friend, Dora. As soon as I have helped Mamma to say how d'ye do to everybody I'll introduce you. (*up R.*)

JED. J. Where is father?

NELLY. I don't know. I think he and mother have had a tiff since dinner. Whimper seems to be very busy. But I must run away. Mind, I expect you to pay great attention to Dora. (NELLY *exits up staircase R.*)

JED. J. Certainly. Meanwhile—— (*enter WHIMPER from L.I.E.*) I'll try and find my Will-o'-the-Wisp. (*looking off archway*) There she is again.

WHIMP. I beg your pardon, sir. Have you seen the master?

JED. J. No, Whimper; who is that young lady?

WHIMP. (*looking off*) Miss Hedway, sir. Major Hedway's niece. (*turns L. and goes up stage*)

JED. J. By Jove! My intended! (*looks off*) Ah! she's gone. (*exit R.*)

WHIMP. I wonder where the master can be? (*Enter JED. S., C., from L. WHIMPER meets him*) I beg your pardon, sir. (*handing letter*) I found this letter under your desk, sir. It is marked "important." It must have fallen from yesterday's bag.

JED. S. Who brought the bag yesterday?

WHIMP. George, sir.

JED. S. Dismiss him.

WHIMP. Yes, sir.

JED. S. At once.

WHIMP. Yes, sir. (*exit WHIMPER, C.R.*)

JED. S. (*taking letter*) It is yesterday's postmark. (*opens letter*) What is this? (*reads*)

"My dear Christopher,—I've nothing very satisfactory to report about your affairs. I find the Colonel has been dead two years, and no trace of his daughter, your wife, is to be found. (*sits L.C.*) It will be difficult to obtain evidence of the ceremony, but I should advise you to steer clear of matrimony till more can be learned. I am sorry for you, old man, but if you will get yourself into equivocal situations you must take the consequences.—Yours always, T. B." (*Looking at envelope*) "Christopher Jedbury, Esquire." This must be a mistake. "T.B." Ah, it is from young Bellamy, and it is intended for my son. (*glances quickly over letter, then starts*) So, the young blackguard is married and separated from his wife—a fitting climax to his disgraceful career. (*crosses L., walking to and fro, crushing the letter in silent passion*) And not a word, not a word about it, when I suggested marriage to him. I have invited this rascal to my house. (*suddenly*) He shall not remain here. (*C.*) I have been weak—weak—but this ends it. (*sits chair up stage L.*) My son—for whom I have toiled, that he might rest—for whom I have saved money that he might spend it. The boy who was to have shed lustre on the name of Jedbury The gentleman who was to have raised the tradesman to the summit of his ambition. And this—this is the end of my life's work.

Enter JED. J. at archway R., looking back.

JED. J. It's no use. The spectre's vanished again. (*he comes downstairs, sees JED. S.*) What's the matter, father? You don't seem well. (*starts to come down*)

JED. S. (*hiding letter*) I will give him a chance of explaining. (*aloud*) It is nothing I have been thinking of business. By-the-bye, Christopher, what about my proposition?

JED. J. (*C.*) (*goes up to him a little carelessly*) Proposition? Ah! Well, I've been considering it.

JED. S. (*watching him narrowly*) Indeed? And your reply is favourable?

JED. J. Distinctly favourable! (*JED. S. controls his temper with difficulty*) I have had the good fortune to see the lady.

JED. S. (*sneeringly*) Oh! And you approve of her?

JED. J. I don't like your way of putting it. The question is, whether she is ever likely to approve of me. I say ever because I shouldn't think of asking her yet awhile.

JED. S. And your object in waiting?

JED. J. (*earnestly*) Well, the fact is, father, I've a notion that I'm capable of earning my living, and I don't intend to marry till I've put my theory to the test.

JED. S. (*sarcastically*) Really? Are you sure that is your *only* reason?

JED. J. Is it not enough?

JED. S. You equivocate. And you also seem a little forgetful. Suppose I suggest another—a different sort of impediment.

JED. J. Impediment?

JED. S. (*deliberately*) Yes, your being already married, for instance.

JED. J. (*crosses down R.—aside*) Good Lord, he's found it out. It's all up.

JED. S. (*following him c.*) I have surprised you. Then bigamy is in your future list of peccadilloes?

JED. J. (*becoming serious*) No, sir. You wrong me. The ridiculous little affair to which you allude must, of course, be illegal. I assure you, on my honour.

JED. S. (*contemptuously*) Your honour. Damn it, sir! your *honour* never impelled you to confess to this "ridiculous little affair."

JED. J. No, the fact is, I was expecting a letter of importance. (*confused*) And I was temporising until it arrived.

JED. S. (*bitterly*) Oh, you were? (*crosses to him*) Is this the letter? (*hands letter*)

JED. J. (*reading envelope*) "Christopher Jedbury, Esquire." (*aside*) Tom Bellaby's a fool! (*turns R.*)

JED. S. Now the letter having arrived, further temporising is unnecessary.

JED. J. (*embarrassed*) Of course, but you see, sir, this turn of affairs has rather upset my calculations. For instance, I never intended you to see this letter.

JED. S. I gathered that.

JED. J. What the deuce am I saying?

Music ready.

JED. S. But I am quite interested—go on! (*goes L. and sits*)

JED. J. (*crosses to him—with great earnestness*) Father, there has never been any sort of confidence between us. We have never understood one another, and that I suppose made me diffident when I got into difficulty. But with regard to the difficulty itself, even you, when you learn the particulars, *must* see that I am not to blame. I'll tell you the story. (*brings chair from L. down*)

JED. S. (*passionately*) No, sir. (*rises*) Even my endurance has a limit. Not a word of this disgraceful intrigue will I hear, so spare yourself a tissue of lies.

JED. J. Father, upon my soul. (JED. S. *crosses R. angrily*)

JED. S. Consider our relations severed. (*music for Lancers*) From this moment you are in my house under protest. (*goes up R.C.*)

Music heard off ; NELLY comes R. to top of stairs.

NELLY. (*calling*) Chris—Chris, you're wanted. Lots of people have come—you must help me to start them dancing. I've told them to play an extra. (*exit NELLY back through archway R.*)

Music continues softly.

JED. J. (*quietly, crosses up R.*) Then I will relieve you of my presence. (*crosses R. ; JED. S. bows, goes towards L., then halts down L.C.*)

JED. S. I suppose you have no definite plans ?

JED. J. (*halting*) I don't think, sir, you have any right to enquire.

JED. S. I have a motive in asking. (*getting C.*) You spoke with some grandeur just now about earning a living. (*smiles*) I am curious to put your words to the test. I hear that Simpson, my managing man in Bombay, has discharged a clerk ; I have to send someone out at once. For Christopher Jedbury, Junior, my son, to go, would lower the dignity of the firm, but as I have already disowned you your name is a blank for you to fill up. Those are my conditions—there is the position. Take it, or leave it. (*walks away across L.*)

JED. J. I will take it.

JED. S. (*surprised*) Ah ! Well ! If in two years Mr. Simpson's account of the new clerk is satisfactory I may see fit to revoke my decree. In the meantime I will trust to that honour which you are so fond of parading.

JED. J. (*abruptly*) What is it you want ?

JED. S. That you communicate with no one here in Devonshire.

JED. J. (*after a pause*) I promise.

JED. S. As for the details of your journey, they can be arranged by letter.

JED. J. I should prefer it.

JED. S. Then there is nothing more.

JED. J. Nothing. (JED. S. *turns away and goes up*) Stay ! (JED. S. *stops and turns*) There is something. You may remember a shabby fellow you met at my London lodgings. If you could arrange to give him some rough work in your Bombay house, he would be found a handy man.

JED. S. It shall be arranged.

JED. J. Thank you. (*aside*) I've secured a place for Job, and I shan't be without a friend.

JED. S. (*coming down a little*) If you desire to remain through the evening it might be better for appearances.

JED. J. Men in my position do not have to consider app. arances.

JED. S. (*relenting*) Still, you might as well remain. (L.C.)

JED. J. I should prefer that you made my excuses.

JED. S. Very well. (*approaching him*) As this is to be "Good-bye" we may as well simulate friendship. (*extends his hand ; comes down R.*)

JED. J. (*declining his hand*) You forget, sir, I am no longer your son—your clerk should beware of undue familiarity. (*turns away*)

JED. S. As you please. (*pause, then goes to C.*) At any rate, I have done my duty. (*extends his hand again, puts it back, goes up to door ; exit C.R.*)

Lancers finish.

JED. J. Your name is a blank for you to fill up. I wonder who it was that first said "Give a dog a bad name and you may as well hang him at once." I think I'll go on the terrace and smoke—no, I won't smoke, it's extravagant. (*si's L.C.*) I shall have to walk to the station—that's five miles. There's a moon—that's some comfort. It's a queer sensation being thrown out of one's home (*business with money*) It's lucky I took a return ticket. The stock of ready's very low. I suppose what they call my personal effects will fetch something. There's always a corresponding advantage even in a dilemma like mine. I have to part with my clothes, and I'm going to a climate where I shan't need any. I wonder what Tom said in that letter (*sees that he has torn it up*) It will take me some time to find out now. (*kneels and begins to pick up small pieces ; reads small piece*) "Nothing satisfactory to report." I might have known it. (*continues to gather up pieces*)

Enter DORA at archway R., fanning herself.

DORA. I hate the Lancers. I shall wait till the round dances begin. (*looks at programme*) "Mr. Jedbury for the Lancers." Why will elderly gentlemen insist on dancing when it makes them puff? I wonder what has become of the son! The hero I have heard so much about but have never seen. I am sure I shall dislike him. I hate dissipated people. (*sees JED J.*) What on earth is that young man doing there? Gracious—it is my poor helpless friend again. He's always on the floor.

JED. J. (*looking up; aside*) My fairy queen. (*she turns to go; aloud*) Don't, don't fade away—for a minute or two. The mortal is in trouble.

DORA. And what is the matter now?

JED. J. Everything (*still on floor*)

DORA. (*pointing to torn paper*) What is that?

JED. J. That, that's a letter. I'm endeavouring to master the contents.

DORA. Why don't you get up?

JED. J. (*staring at her*) Eh?

DORA. Get up.

JED. J. Certainly. (*rises, dusts his knees with his handkerchief.*)

DORA. You look as if you'd had a shock.

JED. J. Yes! I've had a bit of a blow.

DORA. Indeed? I am very sorry.

JED. J. (*with animation*) Are you? That's awfully good of you—I mean you're very kind, don't you know.

DORA. Doesn't it strike you that it would be as well to get someone to introduce us?

JED. J. No—not now. I want to be alone. (*she goes R.*) Alone with you, I mean.

DORA. Really, you must excuse me. (*goes to stairs R.*)

JED. J. But an introduction is quite unnecessary. You are Miss Hedway.

DORA. (*laughing*) How did you know that?

JED. J. I'm right, am I not?

DORA. Oh, yes, quite right. I am Dora Hedway.

JED. J. (*astonished*) Dora! Not blue spectacles—I mean not Miss Jedbury's school friend!

DORA. (*nodding*) You seem surprised?

JED. J. I am. You see I heard that you were very superior and clever and all that sort of thing, you know.

DORA. How funny!

JED. J. (*confused*) I don't mean that—I mean—I don't know what I mean! (*goes L. a little*)

DORA. I don't believe you do. May I ask your name?

JED. J. (*aside*) Name! By George! I haven't thought of one yet. (*aloud*) My name? Well, it's a—blank.

DORA. A. Blank? What does the "A" stand for? Arthur, I suppose. Arthurs are always irrational sort of people.

JED. J. (*aside*) Good! I'm christened, and that relieves me of a great responsibility.

DORA. (*bus. with programme*) Come, Mr. Blank, you seem rather sorry for yourself. Shall I take pity on you and give you the first waltz? (*sits on couch R.*)

JED. J. (*stands by couch R.*) Miss Hedway, you are an angel, but the fact is, I am not exactly a guest here. I am only a clerk of Mr. Jedbury's, and, having had the interview for which I came, I have to return to London.

DORA. What? He hasn't asked you to remain?

JED. J. No.

DORA. Oh, I see! The interview was not exactly——

JED. J. Cordial? No, not to any great extent.

DORA. Don't think me rude. You see, I often take an interest in gentlemen—in a motherly sort of way.

JED. J. What?

DORA. Oh, yes, I know I am young. (*sighs*) But I've had tremendous experience.

JED. J. (*surprised*) What! Not in a motherly sort of way?

DORA. (*rises and crosses L.C.*) What I mean is, that we have a bond of sympathy. You see I have discovered that you don't regard women from a sentimental point of view, and as I am going into a convent, we both can afford to be perfectly frank.

JED. J. (*rises, goes to her C.*) Can we? Then I should strongly advise you against the convent business—a good deal of sameness in a convent!

DORA. That is what Uncle says!

JED. J. Ah! your uncle is evidently a man of sense. (*slight pause*) Well, I suppose I must be getting along.

DORA. If you should happen to change your mind, and remain for the waltz, you may hold me to my promise.

JED. J. May I? (*aside*) By George, I should like to. (*going upstairs, aloud*) I take great interest in you, Miss Hedway!

DORA. Mr. Blank!

JED. J. Oh, I often take an interest in girls—in a fatherly sort of way. (*exits upstairs quickly*; DORA looks after him over balusters)

Enter JED. S. and MAJOR, R.U.E.

MAJOR. Ah, Dora, my girl! (*coming down R. of JED. S.*) When you come to Bombay you must come and stay with me. (*C.*)

JED. S. (*down L.*) I go to Bombay very seldom nowadays. My manager out there is a very superior person. You'll find it quite safe to leave all business matters to him.

Music Ready.

MAJOR. Can he play chess?

JED. S. I doubt it. Business men, you know, accept recreation as a disagreeable duty!

DORA. (*crosses L. in front of MAJOR to JED. S.*) Very well, Mr. Jedbury, I shall scratch your name off my programme. I decline to be a party to any disagreeable duty.

JED. S. Oh, now, now ! (*goes up stage at back with her*)

Enter NELLY on stairs ; she comes down L. ; JED. comes down

NELLY. (*speaks from top of stairs, aside to DORA*) Dora, I want to introduce Christopher. (*looks round ; crosses L.*) Where is he ? I have promised that you will give him the first waltz.

DORA. (R.C.) Very sorry, dear, it's gone !

NELLY. What a pity ! (*crosses to JED. S.*) Papa, what has become of Christopher ?

JED. S. He has been suddenly called away.

NELLY. (*surprised*) What ! He's not gone back to town ?

JED. S. Yes, it was a matter of business. He desired me to make his apologies. (*exit R.*)

NELLY. (*aside*) Christopher gone and without bidding anyone good bye ! What can have happened ? (*quadrille*) (*DORA goes down extreme R. Exit NELLY R.U.E.*)

MAJOR. (*confidentially*) I shall sneak off for a quiet smoke—if anyone asks for me, you don't know what has become of me ! (*exits door L. ; DORA laughs*)

Enter NELLY quickly R.U.E.

NELLY. Oh, Dora, I'm the most miserable girl in all the world. (*crosses L.*)

DORA. What's the matter ? (L.C.)

NELLY. (R.C.) There has been a terrible quarrel between Christopher and papa.

DORA. How do you know ?

NELLY. Mamma is in hysterics. I asked papa what was the matter, but he gave me one stern look and then said, "Nelly, you must forget you ever had a brother ; Christopher is dead." (*turns to stairs*)

DORA. Oh, Nelly, what do you mean ?

NELLY. (*bursting into tears*) Oh, Dora, what shall I do ? You'll never meet him now.

DORA. (*crossing to R*) I'm so sorry, Nelly dear !

NELLY. And I've got to go and dance this beastly Quadrille ! (*exits R.*)

DORA. Poor Nelly ! What a shame to spoil her birthday party ! This must be the old gentleman's day for hauling people over the coals. First it's the poor clerk, and then it's his own son. Oh, I've no patience with him, and I've got to dance with him. I shall go and hide with Uncle in the smoking-room. (*exits door L.D.*)

Enter JED. J. *through archway R., carrying overcoat, hat and valise; he has changed his clothes; enter* BELLAMY R.C. ; JED. J. *throws coat, etc., on chair.*

BELL. Why, Chris, old man, what's up? Where are you going.

JED. J. So you've come at last? Nice fellow you are! You've done it!

BELL. Done what?

JED. J. That letter!

BELL. Well, what about it? Didn't you get it?

JED. J. Oh yes, I got it!

BELL. Well?

JED. J. Why hadn't you the sense to direct it to *me*?

BELL. I did—Christopher Jedbury, Esquire.

JED. J. Well, aren't there two of us? Stupid!

BELL. Hang it all! I forgot the Junior. It has fallen into your gov'nor's hands? I am awfully sorry, old man!

JED. J. So am I. What's the good of that?

BELL. Not much. Where are you going?

JED. J. To India!

BELL. Are you serious?

JED. J. Do I look as if I were joking? Tom, there is no sense in crying over spilt milk. The Gov'nor and I have had a split, and this time it is beyond repair. *(puts down bag up stage L.)* You'll write to me when I get away, for I trust to you to be the one little connecting link between me and England.

BELL. (L.) But your sister Nelly?

JED. J. (L.C. ; *biting his lip*) I—I have given my word to hold no communication.

BELL. Upon my soul, Chris, I am sorry!

JED. J. Show it, Tom—Try and straighten out that matrimonial tangle for me—because—because—

BELL. You're in debt.

JED. J. Wrong! I'm in love.

BELL. *(astonished)* No! Well, old fellow, I wish you luck. But is there nothing I can do for you? Don't be offended. *(pulls out money)* You know you are welcome to anything I've got!

JED. J. Thanks no! I won't start my new career by borrowing.

BELL. Rubbish! For old acquaintance' sake have a fiver—

JED. J. *(suddenly)* I will—take something.

BELL. Good business!

JED. J. I'll take a cigar!

BELL. Right you are! (*going up*) I'll get my cigar case. (*exit R.U.E.*)

JED. J. Dora—something awfully sweet and confiding about that name. She looks like a Dora. (*suddenly*) I would like to stay for that waltz. (*comes down*) It would be worth swallowing a bit of pride for. I'm hanged if I don't go and change my clothes again. (*goes upstairs, taking bag with him*)

Enter WHIMPER R.U.E.

WHIMP. I'm sorry, Master Christopher, to be sent with such a message, but the master says—

JED. J. Well?

WHIMP. He says, sir, that your departure having been already announced there will be no need for you to take leave of the family.

JED. J. (*down L. bitterly*) Very well, Whimper, anything more?

WHIMPER. Yes sir. The carriage is waiting for you at the door

JED. J. Tell my father I prefer to walk. (*WHIMPER looks pained*) All right, Whimper, it's no fault of yours!

WHIMP. I beg your pardon, sir, but you'll allow me to send on your bag for you?

JED. J. All right, Whimper. Good-bye! (*holds out his hand*)

WHIMP. Good-bye, Master Christopher!

JED. J. Say good-bye to the other servants for me.

WHIMP. Yes, sir. (*exits R.C. with bag*).

JED. J. My congé direct. I cannot stay now. No, it would be too humiliating. (*takes up his coat and finds DORA's handkerchief*) Her handkerchief. Mine now, for as the knights of old used to carry their lady's favours to the tilt so shall this go with me, to remind me of the fight I mean to win. (*goes L.*)

Quadrille stops.

NELLY enters softly downstairs.

NELLY. (*coming down, carries envelope*) Chris! Chris! are you alone?

JED. J. (R) Yes, what's the matter, Nell?

NELLY. Oh, don't pretend it's nothing, for I know everything (*crying*) You're going away—never to come back any more.

JED. J. (*gently*) Who knows? Perhaps some day. Don't cry, Nell!

NELLY. Some day—sounds such a long way off. (*goes R. a little*)

JED. J. Now, little sister, don't do that. (*touching the envelope*) What is this?

NELLY. My birthday present. A cheque from papa. I've transferred it to you. You will take it, won't you?

JED. J. (*shaking his head*) My dear Nelly, I couldn't!

NELLY. I know it isn't much, but it will help you till you get settled.

JED. J. It isn't the amount, dear. You don't understand.

NELLY. Yes, I do. It is because you are too proud.

JED. J. But, Nelly, there's no necessity. Why, bless your heart, I'm a regular Croesus. (*crosses L.C.*)

NELLY. Really?

JED. J. Really! (*aside*) Lord forgive me! Come, Nell, wish me good luck—(*enter BELLABY, R.U.E.*)—and show me a smiling face before I go (*embraces her*)

NELLY. (*hysterically*) Don't laugh at us, Mr. Bellaby. We are saying good-bye. (*falls into CHRIS's arms*)

Waltz till end of Act.

BELL. Don't mind me! (*puts cigars in JED.'s pocket on chair up R.*)

JED. J. There is the waltz music. Go along, Nelly. Take care of her, Tom.

BELL. (*approaching her*) May I? (*crosses over to her*)

She leans on his arm as he leads her off R.; she turns and runs down to CHRIS, who meets her half way; they kiss and she and BELLABY exit R.

JED. J. Good-bye. (*sighing*) And now to tramp to the station. (*kneels and turns his trousers up; goes to window L. and looks out*) I shall go across the park this way. I shan't have to run the gauntlet of the people. (*he is opening window when waltz music begins*) By Jove! the waltz! The first waltz! (*listens*) I should have liked that waltz. (C.)

Enter DORA from door L.

DORA. I knew Uncle would go to sleep if he once found a comfortable armchair! Oh, there you are! Have you forgotten our engagement? Perhaps you are afraid of missing the train.

JED. J. (*rising*) Oh, no, not at all! (*absently feeling in pockets*) I can get a special, you know.

DORA. Can you? Then in fulfilment of my promise we will take just one turn here. (*goes up a little*) One good turn.

Music louder.

JED. J. (*puts his arm round her waist and dances two or*

three turns ; music softer) One good turn deserves another.
(music louder ; they dance again ; they stop by the stairs ; music softer) I shall remember my last night in England.

DORA. Last night in England? Then you are going abroad.

JED. J. Yes, to Bombay *(stop dancing)*

DORA. *(stopping)* Bombay! *(going to him)* I wish—I wish—you every success.

JED. J. Thank you! *(shakes hands)* Good-bye!

DORA. *(puts out her hand again)* Good-bye!

JED. J. *(impulsively kissing her extended hand)* Good-bye! God bless you! *(seizes coat, hat and portmanteau and rushes off at window, R.U.E.)*

DORA. *(goes to window and looks after him)* He's going to Bombay! Strange! Uncle is going to Bombay also! It seems very selfish of me to let him go alone. *(looks at hand)* Poor Uncle! He would be so lonely—so very lonely—without me. *(she stands silently watching the door where CHRISTOPHER departed)*

Music continues forte.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

TIME :—Six Months Later.

SCENE :—Bombay. Interior of bungalow or private quarters of Major Hedway. The scene is not minutely described as it is capable of much original treatment. There should be rattan or wicker furniture, a piano, and a large screen. Writing desk near R.C.

DORA discovered at writing table L.

DORA. (*finishing her letter*) There, Miss Nelly. (*leaning back and fanning herself*) It is warm, there's no denying it. (*taking up letter*) It strikes me there is a good deal of Mr. Blank in this letter; I'll read it—(*reads*)—"My dear Nelly, You may possibly remember Mr. Blank, the young secretary sent out by your father just before we came. He has become great friends with uncle." (*looks up*) With uncle! (*reads*) "To whom he has confided an important discovery. There has been what he terms a leakage in the treasury, and it seems that your father's confidence in Mr. Simpson is entirely misplaced. For some strange reason Mr. Blank declines to communicate with your father, and uncle has such implicit faith in Mr. Blank's ability that he will not interfere. However, dear, I have not been bound to secrecy, and you may use my information as you see fit. So you are engaged. You forgot to mention the name of the happy man. I congratulate you. I shall never marry now—" (*sighs and looks up*) I think I am safe in saying that. (*reads*) "I told Mr. Blank so." That sounds suspicious. I'll scratch that out. (*scratches, reads*) "How is it you never mentioned Mr. Blank to me? He seems to be acquainted with your entire history." (*looks up*) I'll underline that. (*does so, reads*) "Yes, my coming to Bombay was rather a sudden resolution, but poor uncle seemed so desolate—" H'm—H'm. (*reads inaudibly*) "Your sincere friend, Dora." (*folds letter and puts in envelope*)

Enter MR. SIMPSON quietly from back L. He has a very sleek and deacon-like make-up. He approaches DORA unperceived, after putting his hat and cane on chair near door. When down stage she sees him and starts.

SIMP. (C.) I beg your pardon, Miss Hedway, for coming in unannounced.

DORA. (*rising*) Do not mention it. You have business with Mr. Blank, I believe. (*going up L*) I will send word that you are here.

SIMP. (*getting in her path*) The business with Mr. Blank can wait. It is not often I am fortunate enough to find you alone, that you need grudge me a few minutes of your society.

DORA. (R.C., *nervously*) But your time?

SIMP. (L.C.) Is my *own* to-day. Our firm has a holiday.

DORA. Really! Mr. Blank never mentioned it. (*crosses to table L.*)

SIMP. I am surprised. He is usually sufficiently communicative with regard to his employers' affairs.

DORA. Mr. Simpson, I must remind you that Mr. Blank is my uncle's guest.

SIMP. I wish he were more worthy of the *honour*. (DORA *turns*) Forgive me, Miss Dora, I would not offend you for the world.

DORA. Then in that case you will please remember that I am "Miss Hedway," except to my friends.

SIMP. And why may I not be numbered among your friends?

DORA. Because I reserve to myself the privilege of choosing them. (*calmly stamps her letter*)

SIMP. You are wise to limit your acquaintanceship. New confidences sometimes necessitate embarrassing revelations.

DORA. What do you mean? (*turns to him*)

SIMP. Nothing. (*aside*) A random shot, but it went home.

DORA. I beg you to excuse me, Mr. Simpson. My uncle—(*going*)

SIMP. (*stopping her*) Is playing chess. Don't disturb him. He might be angry.

DORA. His anger is preferable to your—

SIMP. To my civility. You don't mean that. In any case I am going to ask you to bear with it for two minutes. (DORA *pauses*) I don't insist. (*points to chair R. of table; DORA sits*) Miss Hedway, you have refused me your friendship. I accept the decree with equanimity, for it suggests the possibility of a warmer feeling—(DORA *looks up*)—by and bye. (DORA *rises; points to seat*) You have given me two minutes, I think. (DORA *sits*) Let me try to explain, and if I do not couch my sentiments in the phrases of a conventional suitor, make some allowance for my matter of fact training. I am a man of business, and my business instincts never deceive me. You have lately allowed your uncle to speculate with your money, with the result that you are no longer independent. The Major's pension will never be enough to support him in the style in which he lives, and his capital is invested in a business of which he knows nothing.

He is at the mercy of commercial men who *might* bankrupt him to-morrow. A perilous outlook for you. Here is a safer one. A home in any part of the world you may choose. A private income, and the passionate devotion of a man who—who—never thought of marriage till he saw *you*. (*she looks at him*) When I intimate that your uncle's security rests with me, it is no idle boast. My position with our firm is such that I can build it, or wreck it, at my pleasure. I *warned* you that I was practical.

DORA. The warning was superfluous. I can only regret that you should have thought it necessary to reveal the state of your private affairs, for they can never be any concern of mine.

SIMP. Then your answer is—

DORA. No. *Now, and for all time.*

Enter JED. J. at back L. ; he walks down unobserved.

SIMP. Perhaps you will reconsider.

DORA. I shall never reconsider. It is *no*, emphatically *no*.

SIMP. (*approaching her*) I may drive you to—

JED. J. (*coming between them—C., angrily*) No. (*changing tone*) Hang it all, the lady said “no.” Can’t you take “no” for an answer.

SIMP. (*R., angrily*) I was not aware that you were invited to this discussion.

JED. J. (*looking at DORA*) I beg Miss Hedway's pardon, but I happened in by chance, and overheard you threatening to drive the lady. Now, it's too abominably hot for a drive, so I coincided with her, and said “no,” decidedly “no.”

SIMP. There is a homely proverb about two being company and three none.

JED. J. To be sure. (*offers SIMPSON his hat and cane*) Permit me.

SIMPSON turns away and JED. J. puts hat and cane down at back C.R.—SIMPSON goes a little R.

DORA. You gentlemen have business together, I will leave you.

SIMP. 'Tis not yet time for our appointment. I have sent to the office for some papers.

DORA. Pending their arrival my uncle will entertain you, he is on the verandah. (*pause*)

JED. J. On the verandah ! (*SIMPSON bows, takes hat and cane, and exit L.C.*) I think I did that very nicely. (*walks up, watches SIMPSON off, returns to DORA, who crosses L.*) Miss Hedway, has that man been annoying you ? (*coming down C.*)

DORA. Yes. No—that is——

JED. J. Won't you tell me the truth?

DORA. (*L. of table*) The truth is, I have taken a great dislike to Mr. Simpson, and I am foolish enough to show it. That is all. Let us change the subject. Aren't you awfully warm?

JED. J. (*C., fanning himself with hat*) No, thanks. I am very comfortable.

DORA. With such a heavy coat?

JED. J. It is the only one I could find. Job is an awful fellow to conceal one's wearing apparel.

DORA. Where is Job?

JED. J. Gone for the mail, confound him!

DORA. Well, take that coat off.

JED. J. May I? (*removes it*)

DORA. Dear, dear, you poor helpless mortal. Look at the torn lining. I will stitch it for you if you will bring me that basket.

JED. J. This one? (*referring to paper basket; fetches basket from table up R.C.*)

DORA. (*spreads the coat out on her knee*) Find me a needle. (*JED. J. hesitates at head of table*) Please—

JED. J. That's better—

DORA. I am very cross to-day. I can't help it. It's the heat.

JED. J. (*giving needle*) I don't mind it.

DORA. What—the heat, or my temper?

JED. J. Either. (*breaks off very long thread*)

DORA *takes thread, breaks a very small piece off, and throws the remainder away; JED. J. picks it up and winds it round his finger in an absent manner*

DORA. (*stitching*) Is there anything under the sun you do mind?

JED. J. (*idling with contents of work-basket*) Only you, I mind you, because—because I can't help myself.

DORA. I can't rid myself of the impression that you've grown somehow since you have been out here.

JED. J. I have grown—grown bald.

DORA. Nonsense.

JED. J. (*behind the table*) It is true. Look how thin my hair is on the top. It is worry.

DORA. What have you been worrying about? (*laughing*)

JED. J. About you. I thought you were going into a convent.

DORA. (*stitching quickly*) You don't approve of a woman taking the veil?

JED. J. Oh, yes, I do, but I think it ought to be a *white* veil, with *orange blossoms*.

DORA. (*giving him coat and rising hurriedly, and crosses R.*) It's very warm. (*she crosses to R.C. and sits*)

JED. J. You said that before. It's an astonishing thing, but the weather becomes a topic of absorbing interest when we are alone. (*pause ; they look at each other*)

DORA. (*standing near screen*) Well? (*fanning herself*)

JED. J. (*fun business*) Well?

DORA. (*impatiently*) Haven't you anything to say?

JED. J. Yes. We are going to have rain.

DORA. Thank goodness. When?

JED. J. I don't know *when*, but we'll have it *some* of these days.

DORA. How ridiculous. Oh, dear, it's very—

JED. J. (*hurriedly*) Yes, I know. It's a generally accepted fact that it's very warm.

DORA. (*laughing*) How's business? (*leans against arm of chair R.C.*)

JED. J. Whose business?

DORA. Your business.

JED. J. Oh, pretty well, thank you. Coffee's weak, nutmegs are rolling, peppers are strong, and cinnamon steady.

DORA. What about Mr. Simpson?

JED. J. He's not so steady as the cinnamon. He's beginning to topple.

DORA. What did he say when you told him of your discovery?

JED. J. Became indignant and threatened to kick me out, but he has changed his mind, and has condescended to an explanation.

DORA. H'm. And who is going to dictate terms?

JED. J. (*emphatically*) I am.

DORA. That is right. (*rises*) I once told you that I thought "Arthurs" were heedless and stupid. I withdraw the accusation.

JED. J. Arthur? Oh, yes. Arthur, to be sure

DORA. Don't say you have forgotten your own name.

JED. J. No, I haven't forgotten it, but you see, I was never called Arthur much as a boy.

DORA. You have a very odd last name—"Blank." I never knew any one before of that name. (*crosses to table L. and picks up letter*)

JED. J. Neither did I.

DORA. (*crosses to table L. ; offering letter*) Will you have this posted for me?

JED. J. With pleasure. (*takes it ; aside*) Where the deuce have I seen that writing? For the English mail, of course. (*looking at the writing*)

DORA. Yes, it is for Miss Jedbury. (*crosses to R.C.*)

JED. J. How is Nelly? Bless her dear little heart.

DORA. (*with dignity*) Nelly? Bless her dear little heart! Really you are very familiar, Mr. Blank.

JED. J. I didn't mean to be.

DORA. (*moving R. ; aside*) I see it all. He is in love with Nelly, and the father wouldn't hear of it. (*sits R.*) Now I know what the stormy interview was about (*aloud*) You know Miss Jedbury well?

JED. J. Intimately.

DORA. You admire her?

JED. J. Immensely.

DORA. You told her so?

JED. J. Frequently.

DORA. That was very imprudent. What did Nelly say?

JED. J. Say? Oh, she said she'd always be a *sister* to me.

DORA. She did? Then you haven't the ghost of a chance.

JED. J. I know it.

DORA. (*R.C.*) And you are resigned?

JED. J. (*C.*) Quite.

DORA. (*rising*) Mr. Blank—*Arthur*—

JED. J. Yes. That's right. Call me *Arthur*.

DORA. I sympathise with you. You have acted bravely. It must have been an *awful* wrench.

JED. J. (*pretending to shudder*) It was, it was. Yet, I'd go through it all over again to have you sympathise with me.

DORA. But to return to Nelly.

JED. J. No, don't return to Nelly, I'd rather stay here with you.

DORA. (*shakes her finger*) When will you learn that I am just an elderly sort of person? To be treated seriously.

JED. J. Never.

DORA. Then I shall not permit you to talk to me at all.

JED. J. Don't—Don't be cruel. I'll call you *Grandma* if you say so.

DORA. You are incorrigible. (*business ; laughs*) But what was I going to say? Ah! it was about Nelly's brother Christopher. You know him, I believe.

JED. J. Yes—no—that is, slightly.

DORA. Well, you have *met* him. How did he impress you?

JED. J. Impress me? H'm—I thought him a good-looking sort of a chap—clever—upright—in fact, on the whole, a noble specimen of perfect manhood. (*striking attitude—aside*) I consider that a most accurate description. (*goes L.*)

DORA. Then I don't agree with you. Between you and me (*confidentially*) that young man is a very bad lot.

JED. J. No ! Then I'll never speak to him again.

DORA. I know it for a fact. He *drinks*.

JED. J. No.

DORA. And he bets on races.

JED. J. No.

DORA. Yes. I noticed it when I visited those rooms in London.

MAJOR. (*outside*) Dora ! Dora ! where's Dora ?

DORA. (*rises*) My uncle, and I have not given orders for his tiffin. (*exit L.*)

JED. J. (*R.C.*) A drunkard and a gambler. If the Major's voice hadn't cut short my profligate career, no knowing how I should have ended. I shall never dare to tell her who I am now. No, I am doomed to be A. Blank to the end of the chapter.

Enter JOB from back L.

JED. J. (*JOB coming down with letters and papers*) Ah, Job, you scoundrel. Any letters ? (*extending his hand*)

JOB. (*L.C.*) None for you, sir.

JED. J. (*disappointedly*) I am a fool to expect any.

JOB. It ain't *my* fault, Mr. Jedbury—

JED. J. (*turns quickly*) You call me Mr. Jedbury again and you'll wish you died as an infant.

JOB. I beg pardon, sir. It's the first slip for months. It must have been old recollections brought about by this here. (*produces handbill*) There sir, cast your eyes over that.

JED. J. An announcement.

JOB. Read it, sir.

JED. J. (*spreading out bill ; reads*) " Mr. and Mrs. Glibb, the renowned philanthropists," Mrs. Glibb ! Can it possibly be *my* Mrs. Glibb. (*voices heard off*)

MRS. G. (*outside*) My dear Major, Mr. Glibb's brain is positively colossal.

JED. J. It is my Mrs. Glibb, Job. If the Major enquires for me, I'm gone away for a month. (*goes towards L. as MR. GLIBB enters L. slowly and stands at the door with his hands behind him. GLIBB looks at JED. J. ; wheels suddenly round*) Cornered !

JOB. (*in a loud whisper*) Try the verandah, sir.

JED. J. *goes to verandah as MRS. GLIBB and MAJOR appear.*

JED. J. No good. Retreat cut off.

JOB. My advice is, rush it, sir. *I'll* make a clearing. Follow me.

JOB poses in pedestrian fashion, and then makes a rush for the door at which **MR. GLIBB** is looking in. He strikes with force against him, which causes **GLIBB** to wheel round. **JED. J.** bolts out after **JOB**, and **GLIBB**, who is thoroughly bewildered, stands staring after them, as **MAJOR** and **MRS. GLIBB** enter from verandah. **GLIBB** then drops down behind chair **L**.

MRS. G. And the first lecture, Major. How many tickets may I put you down for? (*writes in note book*)

MAJOR. (*aside*) Oh for twenty minutes' sleep. (*aloud*). We'll say three. (*aside, yawning*) Just twenty minutes. (*sits R. of table*)

MRS. G. Three and twenty. Thank you, Major. You military gentlemen are always to be relied upon for generosity in a noble cause. (*to GLIBB, who has taken up his position behind MAJOR*) George.

MAJOR. (*aside*) I felt there was something there. (*moves to the other chair extreme L.*)

MRS. G. Tell the Major about my treacherous memory. (*MR GLIBB prepares to speak*) Mr. Glibb is quite right. I had positively forgotten our acquaintance, till he reminded me that Major Hedway would doubtless prove our great support. (*enter DORA C.*) Ah, your charming niece. George, you remember Miss Hedway? (*GLIBB bows, and gradually moves until he gets behind the MAJOR again*)

DORA. (*R.C*) This is a very pleasant surprise.

MRS. G. (*L.*) You are too good.

DORA. Not at all. We are so awfully dull here, that any change is welcome. That is—I mean—

MAJOR. Eyes front, Dora, my darling.

DORA. It's getting delightfully cool on the verandah, and I think we can offer you a sherbet. (*goes to back and calls*) Job, Job, please have these chairs taken out for us.

Enter JOB.

MRS. G. (*seeing him*) Good gracious. This is surely a familiar face. (*JOB starts and tries to get away*) It is—why—Job, what are you doing out here?

DORA. Job is waiting on a guest of ours.

MRS. G. What? You have forsaken Mr. Christopher? (*JOB shakes his head and then nods violently*)

DORA. Mr. Christopher?

MRS. G. Young Mr. Jedbury, Job's former employer. (*to JOB*) What has become of that naughty boy? (*JOB looks bewildered, and presently casts his eyes up and produces his handkerchief*)

MRS. G. Dead—is it possible? (MR. GLIBB *turns and looks at door*)

DORA. Nelly's brother dead?

MRS. G. What did he die of? (JOB *hesitates, then slowly raises his hand to his mouth to signify that JED. J. died of drink*)

DORA. That teapot!

MRS. G. Oh, how shocking!

DORA. Poor Nelly.

MRS. G. Oh, George, let it be a warning to you. (MAJOR *sees GLIBB behind him and changes back into other chair; GLIBB moves with him and stations himself behind him again; JOB takes chair up*)

JED J. *enters at back unperceived, except by JOB, who rushes to him.*

JOB. Go away, sir, you're dead.

JED. J. Eh, dead—am I? Then I'll go and bury myself. *exit L. back, followed by JOB with chair*

MRS. G. Christopher dead—I cannot realise it.

MAJOR, *(after glancing behind him and rising, offering his arm to MRS. GLIBB)* A false sentiment to lament death. We all die, every man Jack of us, and Major Hedway will endeavour to go with his boots on. *(aside to DORA)* Bring along the gay Lothario, Dora. *(strolls off C. with MRS. GLIBB L.)*

DORA. Mr. Glibb. Come along. It's all right—I shan't hurt you. (GLIBB *hesitates, then follows her off*)

JOB *re-enters back.*

JED. J. *(looking in at door L.)* H'st—Job!

JOB. It's all right, sir, they're gone.

JED. J. Then see they don't come back till I've found my tobacco. I refuse to go to the tomb without my pipe *(looking for pipe)* What did I die of, Job?

JOB. Drink.

JED. J. (L.C.) Eh!

JOB. I couldn't help it, sir. You'd got to be killed, somehow.

JED. J.. Job, you are a conscientious, good-for-nothing scoundrel. Get out.

JOB *exit C.L. with second chair.*

JED. J. Where the deuce is that pipe? Ah, here it is I must have removed it from my pocket when Dora mended my coat. *(tenderly)* Dora—I always call her Dora when there is no one to hear me. *(pause)* I wonder how Bellaby's in-

vestigations are proceeding. He says if I will only wait seven years I shall be free anyhow. Four years more. How would he like it himself? (*finds cross attached to chain on desk R.C.*) Her locket—must have fallen from her neck. I wonder if I might keep it. (*pockets it*) I have become a perfect kleptomaniac where anything belonging to Dora is concerned.

Enter DORA C.

DORA. I must have dropped it somewhere. Oh, have you found a gold locket with a monogram?

JED. J. No, but I'll look for it (*suddenly kneels and looks on floor*) Ah, here it is. (*takes it from pocket and pretends to have found it; offers cross but retains hold of chain*)

DORA. (L.C.) Oh, thank you. It's intrinsic value is nothing, but it was my poor father's last present. He bought it in Trinidad.

JED. J. (*suddenly dropping chain*) Trinidad? (*kneeling L.C.*)

DORA. Yes. Have you ever been there?

JED. J. Oh, yes. I've been there. Once.

DORA. Once. Then I suppose you don't remember much about it.

JED. J. On the contrary. My remembrance of Trinidad is most distinct.

DORA. So is mine. (*sighs*) It holds the most painful recollections for me. Won't you get up?

JED. J. (*catching hold of cross, she has the chain*) No, thanks, I am very comfortable, and it makes you look so tall. Away up in the skies, where you belong.

DORA. (*smiling*) You seem to have taken quite a fancy to my locket.

JED. J. Yes. I—I'm trying to read Dora (*DORA looks*) in this monogram.

DORA. Oh, that isn't meant for Dora at all. Dora is really my second name. The first is so hideous that I discarded it when I assumed the other.

JED. J. Assumed? What other?

DORA. Hedway. (*confidentially*) I have never told anyone my secret. The fact is, that I have a—there is something.

JED. J. (*anxiously*) Yes. You have a —?

DORA. In the past.

JED. J. (*relieved*) The past. Oh, bother the past. Think of the future. Your future—my future Dora, forgive me, dear. I can't keep it any longer. I've something to tell you. Something that—

DORA. (*shrinking away*) No, you'd better not. Not now. I don't know. I must take time to consider.

JED. J. Certainly, take seven years.

DORA. Eh?

JED. J. I mean four. You see, it's better not to hurry these things, and—

Enter SIMPSON L.C.

DORA. (*turning*). Mr. Simpson. (*DORA drops JED. J.'s hand and exit L.; leaves JED. J. on his knees somewhat embarrassed by SIMPSON'S entrance*)

JED. J. (*aside*) A bad beginning for me, but we must see if the positions cannot be reversed before the interview is closed. (*rises, calmly points to chair by table*) Sit down, Mr. Simpson, I have given orders that we are not to be disturbed.

SIMP. (*crossing to L., referring to the position in which he found JED. J.*) Didn't you take that precaution a little late?

JED. J. (*carelessly*) Better late than never. (*draws chair C. and sits*)

SIMP. (*smiling*) Charming young lady, Miss Hedway. (*sits L.*) Though a little free in her manners, I should imagine.

JED. J. I wouldn't let my imagination run too far, if I were you.

SIMP. I never do. I may be keen at grasping a situation. (*significantly*) but I don't deduce anything from it, unless I am driven to do so by circumstances.

JED. J. A safe plan.

SIMP. (*taking cigar from case*) Does your fair hostess permit?

JED. J. Yes.

SIMP. (*offering case*) Will you join me?

JED. J. No, I prefer my pipe. (*lights pipe*)

SIMP. (*sitting R. of table*) A less expensive habit. I always smoked a pipe when I was a clerk, although I now confess I don't like the flavour.

JED. J. That's a pity.

SIMP. Why?

JED. J. You might have to go back to the pipe.

SIMP. Possibilities are limitless. You might suddenly develop a taste for expensive cigars.

JED. J. Very likely. But I shall also endeavour to develop the means of paying for them honestly.

SIMP. Of course, of course. Honesty is always the best policy, and in spite of our little misunderstanding, I have never doubted yours.

JED. J. (*coldly*) Thanks.

SIMP. Now, with your permission, we will revert to the subject of your late——

JED. J. Detection.

SIMP. H'm—You use very extravagant expressions, but we won't argue about that.

JED. J. No, don't let us argue

SIMP. (*rising and walking uneasily*) You were sent out to me some six months ago with no special recommendation beyond a good education. It was not mercantile, however, and gave you no advantage over the other clerks. I thought I saw in you an intelligent man, and I at once started to bring out whatever germs of business talent you might possess.

JED. J. (*quietly*) That was your first mistake.

SIMP. (*with slight anger*) Observing a taste for mathematics I placed you in the book-keeping department.

JED. J. That was your second mistake.

SIMP. (*with increased anger*) And finally, believing that you were to be trusted, I gave you access to my own private books.

JED. J. That was your third and most serious mistake.

SIMP. (*controlling himself*) Go on. I am curious to see how far ingratitude can go. (*sits at L.*)

JED. J. Are you? Then listen to me. (*puffing his pipe*) Fifteen years ago, I am told, Mr. Jedbury took into his service a young man, who *not* having the drawback of a classical education, plodded on, with the help of his trusting employer, until he obtained sufficient knowledge to fill the important position of manager in the Bombay house.

SIMP. (*impatiently*) Narratives do not interest me.

JED. J. Really. I thought you were curious as to ingratitude.

SIMP. (*assuming ease*) Your assurance is simply amusing.

JED. J. Amusing. Wait a bit. I haven't begun to be funny yet. (*takes a paper from pocket*) You appear anxious for the denouement, so I'll skip details. A few weeks ago, I suggested we should review the last few years' balance sheets, so as to compare with accuracy the annual profits. You agreed. Finding a slight discrepancy in last year's accounts I looked up the duplicate books which I knew to be in your possession.

SIMP. (*rising*) You had no right to touch them in my absence.

JED. J. You shouldn't have taken a holiday.

SIMP. (*sits impatiently*) Well, sir, you found the books.

JED. J. Yes, but they were not duplicates, except in the matter of binding. The totals were distinctly at variance.

SIMP. You lie.

JED. J. 'Sh! Don't raise your voice. The Major's gone to sleep. Pardon me, did I understand you to say that I lied? Quite a mistake. I assure you I speak by the card. (*producing paper*) Let me begin with the credit total for last year. The firm's ledger says sixteen thousand four hundred and twenty-two pounds. Your private ledger for the same (*slowly reading*) eighteen thousand and—

SIMP. It is false.

JED. J. Yes, I know it is. That is what I am getting at. I repeat that your private ledger gives last year's profit at eighteen thousand—

SIMP. Nothing of the sort. That is the ninety-two return.

JED. J. Ah, thank you. I wanted to find out how long you had been working this little game.

SIMP. It is an evidence of your business inexperience that you haven't allowed for my commissions.

JED. J. Commissions? But how about that extra annual two hundred, noted as the equivalent for commissions?

SIMP. (*angrily; rises*) I am not here for cross examination. With an audacity that only ignorance can excuse, you imply my dishonesty.

JED. J. Oh no. I don't imply, I assert. Mr. Simpson, I charge you with being a thief. Now (*standing erect*) answer it like a man. (*SIMPSON starts, as if he would attack him, then turns away smiling*)

SIMP. And you think you will be able to prove your statement?

JED. J. Well, I'm green in the business, as you say, but I have a document here which would ripen the intelligence of a June pippin. (*produces letter*)

SIMP. A letter to me from the firm?

JED. J. No. Not the letter, but a forged copy of it.

SIMP. Forgery—you are becoming indiscreet.

JED. J. Oh, no, I'm all right. (*unfolding letter*) Now, Mr. Simpson, the original letter from Mr. Jedbury authorises you to purchase a certain quantity of ivory, if obtainable, at five thousand. This—the copy you made to show to the Rajah—says three thousand five hundred. Managing man's profit (*pointing to SIMPSON*) fifteen hundred. Barring this little discrepancy, the letters are identical. Both the original and this are signed "Christopher Jedbury."

SIMP. What did you expect to prove by that?

JED. J. Nothing, until I secured your receipt from the Rajah. Here it is. (*shows paper*) You have sent the bogus one to London. (*pause*) Well, I am waiting—

SIMP. Waiting?

JED. J. Yes. I have stated the case. The question is, what is going to be done about it? Now, go ahead, and let me have your proposition.

SIMP. (*aside*) Proposition. He wants a share. Ah! (*aloud*) It is a pity that in making what you term your discovery you should have assumed so hostile a manner. It *might* have led to serious results. In fact, my first impulse was to discharge you, as you know I have full power to do. But on second thoughts—

JED. J. Ah, second thoughts are best. (*sits R C.*)

SIMP. (*sits L C.*) I say on second thoughts I felt I should be injuring the firm by robbing them of a really bright young man, merely to gratify a personal spite. Therefore I am content to let bygones be bygones, and moreover to admit you into a sort of private partnership. First, assuring you that the trifling irregularities you have remarked are strictly in the way of legitimate business. This is my proposition. What do you say to it?

JED. J. (*quietly*) Say to it? Oh dear, oh dear. Have you any idea what an infernal rogue you are? (*rises*) Now you go home at once and send in your resignation, or in twenty-four hours I will communicate with Mr. Jedbury myself.

SIMP. (*rising ; changing tone*) Then you mean to fight, do you?

JED. J. I do.

SIMP. (*angrily*) You little know your employer if you think that your accusations can weigh against my fifteen years of hard service. My word will stand before yours.

JED. J. (*aside ; perplexed*) I am afraid it will.

SIMP. (*loudly*) I can discharge you this instant and give any reason I choose to manufacture. To-day I will make you the talk of Bombay, and to-morrow have you hounded from the town.

JED. J. (*aside quickly*) What shall I do? Sink with the ship? No, I'll keep it floating. There's only one way, and here goes. (*aloud*) So you think that you can appeal to your employer. What if your employer has already suspected you? What if he sent six months ago a spy to report to him as to the truth of his suspicions? (*SIMPSON starts*) Are you still as blind as you were when that spy arrived? The young clerk calling himself Arthur Blank, who now discharges you in his real name, and in the name of the firm. I am Christopher Jedbury Junior, son of your employer. (*points C.*) Now go.

SIMP. (*enraged*) A lie!

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SIX WEEKS LATER.

SCENE.—*Same as Act III., with slightly different arrangement of furniture ; screen near piano ; small table L.C.*

DORA. (*at desk*) What is the matter with me to-day ? I have a fearful attack of blues. Well, the prospect is not cheering. And yet it is no worse than it has been for the last three years. (*takes paper from desk, scans it*) Yes, three years. (*looking up*) My marriage contract. I wonder if I could find you, Mr.—Mr.—(*looks at paper*)—Mr. Bellaby. (*looks up*) But I don't want to find you, that's the trouble. (*pauses*) I have a good mind to confide in uncle. (*shakes her head*) No ! Dear old uncle ! He would only want to kill somebody, and think of the talk—the scandal. No, no ! (*puts paper away, and closes desk*) Better let it alone. (*goes to piano, sits and strikes a few chords*)

Enter JED. J. C. ; he goes to chair back of screen.

JED. J. I wonder if I shall get a letter from Tom Bellaby to-day ? I can't bear this suspense any longer.

DORA. (*to herself*) I may as well be candid with myself, and own up what is the matter. It is Christopher !

JED. J. (*hearing his name*) Eh ? (*listens ; peers round the screen and gives a satisfied sigh*)

DORA. I dreamed of him last night. I thought he was ill, wounded, and I was nursing him. I was bandaging his forehead, and we were so happy. (*sighs*) At least I was. I wish the dream would come true. (*music*) It is so delightful to minister to those we love.

JED. J. That settles it. (*produces handkerchief, folds it bandage fashion and binds it on his head*)

DORA. But Christopher is so wretchedly healthy. (*she drums on the piano*) Strong as a lion—he'll die of old age !

JED. J. If I have my choice he will.

DORA. Old age ! Dreadful thought ! (*plays and sings*)

“ Falling leaf and fading tree,
Lines of white in a sullen sea,
Shadows rising on you and me ;
The swallows are making them ready to fly,
Wheeling out on a windy sky.
Good-bye, summer, good-bye, good-bye !
Good-bye to hope, good-bye, good-bye ! ”

When she commences JED. J. *peeps over screen and listens ; at the last "good-bye" she stops with a crash, and falls crying on the piano ;* JED. J. *comes from behind the screen.*

JED. J. *(pulling her hands from before her face)* Now don't, dear ! Please don't ! Dora, Dora,—*(she looks up quickly)* I mean Auntie, don't now, there's a dear girl—I mean there's a good old person.

DORA. *(jumping up)* Don't what ? Why, I was just enjoying a good old laugh. *(laughs in forced manner)*

JED. J. Ha, ha, ha ! What was the joke ? *(she continues to force a laugh—he also affecting to laugh)* Awfully funny, to be sure.

DORA. *(catching sight of the bandage)* Good gracious, what's the matter ?

JED. J. Which ? Where ? *(DORA points to his head ; affecting weakness)* Oh, nothing much. I've had a slight accident, that's all.

DORA. *(aside)* Extraordinary—my dream ! *(crosses to him)* Does it hurt you much ? *(touches bandage)*

JED. J. Ouch ! Yes, but I will try and bear it !

DORA. You are faint !

JED. J. Am I ? *(she takes him to chair L.C.)*

DORA. Stay here. I will fetch you some smelling salts, poor fellow. *(she goes to door behind screen ; he is about to follow)* No, sit still. I won't be a moment. *(exit at door R.)*

JED. J. *(pushing up the bandage so that it rests turban fashion on his head)* No, thanks. No smelling salts. I think I'll go. *(as he starts up c. voices are heard off)* By Jove ! I know that voice.

He peeps off, then rushes behind screen as MR. and MRS. JEDBURY and NELLY enter c. They are followed by WHIMPER.

NELLY. We are all right, mamma, I have sent our cards to Major Hedway. *(remains up looking off L.C.)*

JED. J. *(behind screen)* My entire family, by all that's unexpected. How am I to escape ?

MRS. J. *(R.C.)* Whimper !

WHIMP. *(C.)* Yes, ma'am.

MRS. J. My compliments to your master, and I think it would have been more polite to have written the Major that we were coming.

JED. S. *(L.C.)* Whimper !

WHIMP. *(without moving)* Yes, sir.

JED. S. When I require any advice from your mistress, I will ask for it.

WHIMP. *(turning his head to MRS. J. and giving the least*

cough) Mr. Jedbury thanks you for the suggestion, ma'am, but thinks the present manner of announcement will be satisfactory.

JED. J. *lifts the screen and carries it in front of him, backing till he reaches door R. ; he then drops screen noiselessly and exits door R. ; he should not make any noise with screen.*

JED. S. (*who has seen the screen move*) Bless my soul !

NELLY. (*coming down slightly*) What is the matter, papa ?

MRS. J. (*pointing to JED. S.*) Whimper—sunstroke.

WHIMPER *steps forward.*

JED. S. (*irritably*) Whimper—mind your own business.

NELLY. (*R.C., soothing her father*) I am just dying to see Christopher. I am sure, papa, that you never thought he would have acted with so much discretion.

JED. S. When I am in fault, Nelly, I have the justice to acknowledge it.

NELLY *goes up and looks off L.C. again.*

MRS. J. Whimper, you can remind your master that I knew he was in fault all along.

Enter DORA hurriedly with smelling salts.

DORA. Good gracious ! Mr. and Mrs. Jedbury, how do you do ? (*shaking hands*) Have you seen Christopher ?

JED. S. Not yet. We have this moment arrived. My dear young lady, we can never thank you enough for the information your letters contained !

NELLY *coming down on tiptoe from R.C., and clasping her hands over DORA'S eyes.*

DORA. (*C.*) It is Nelly—this is a surprise. But where is your brother ? I left him here not five minutes ago. He is ill—I am afraid—that is—

MRS. J. My son ill ! Oh, retribution ! Whimper, tell your master it is a judgment upon him !

JED. S. (*down L.*) Whimper, if your mistress insists on making a fool of herself, let her go outside and do it.

WHIMF (*without moving*) Mr. Jedbury suggests that you might like a stroll on the verandah, ma'am.

Enter JOB L.

JOB. (*up C. ; to MR. and MRS. J.*) Major Hedway's compliments, sir, and will you have the goodness to step this way ? (*MRS. J. turns up and exits at back followed by WHIMPER*)

JED. S. (*pausing at exit; looking at JOB*) Dear me, we have surely met before.

JOB. (*embarrassed*) Yes, sir. In London. I'm Job, sir. Job Smith.

JED. S. Mr. Smith, of course, Christopher's friend. Very glad to renew your acquaintance. (*he shakes hands violently and further embarrasses JOB as they exeunt L. back*)

NELLY. They are gone—now we can have a nice long chat. (*NELLY sits on stool C.; DORA on chair R. of table*) Isn't it delightful that papa and Christopher are going to be friends again? And it's all your doing!

DORA. Mine!

NELLY. Of course. I showed papa your letters, and he determined to come and investigate. Then I wanted to see you so much, that I teased him till he agreed to make it a family party. Dear old Chris, he was too proud to write; didn't he keep his secret well? I longed to tell you who Mr. Blank really was, but I didn't dare. And what has made you change your mind about the convent?

DORA. Well, dear, *uncle* didn't approve of it. But, Nelly, you have not said a word about your—about your—*fiancé*.

NELLY. No. I am saving him till the last. Oh, I'm so happy, Dora, and he is with us, you know.

DORA. What?

NELLY. Yes. It was his vacation, and I wouldn't let papa rest till he had invited him to come. (*rising and taking her hand*) Come and let me introduce you. He thinks he remembers catching just a glimpse of you at my birthday ball. Do you remember him?

DORA. (*goes to door R.C.*) How do I know, when you have never mentioned his name?

NELLY. Haven't I?

DORA. No. You always say "he" as if there were only one man in the world.

NELLY. Oh well!—you shall see him, (*going to door, calls*) Tom!

DORA. (*aside*) Tom! How I hate that name! (*crosses to R.C.*)

Enter BELLABY. NELLY brings him down L.

NELLY. Tom, this is my dearest friend Dora—Miss Hedway. Dora, this is Tom—Mr. Bellaby!

DORA. (*astonished*) Bellaby—Mr. Tom Bellaby?

BELL. (*not noticing her agitation*) Delighted to meet you Nelly has talked so much of you.

DORA. (*aside*) It must be the same!

NELLY. Why, Dora, what's the matter?

DORA. Nothing! I've had so much excitement this morning.

NELLY. I want you two to be very good friends.

BELL. I shall be delighted if Miss Hedway will permit me. (*offers his hand*)

DORA. (*aside, ignoring his hand*) We shall either be excellent friends or excellent enemies. (*crosses to L.*)

BELL. (*aside, disconcerted*) What can she mean? (*L.C.*)

NELLY. (*to DORA*) He is so clever—such a lawyer. He has won every case he has had, so far.

BELL. Rather, I think I have.

DORA. A lawyer! Oh, then, Nelly, I want to consult him. Can I not see him a few minutes alone?

NELLY. (*in amazement*) Alone? Dora—

DORA. Yes, it is something very important. Something with which *your* happiness is connected, dearest. Let me see him for five minutes, and then I will send him after you.

NELLY. Tom!

BELL. Yes, Nelly. (*crosses C.*)

NELLY. Miss Hedway wishes to consult you on legal business.

BELL. (*crosses R., aside*) Another case—my second. (*crosses L.*) I haven't had one since that affair of Christopher's.

DORA rises and crosses up C. with NELLY.

NELLY. I don't often leave Tom, dear. (*going*) A girl can't see too much of the man she's going to marry. (*exits C.*)

DORA. No, no, she can't. (*to him*) Mr. Bellaby, you are probably surprised at my seeking a private interview on so short an acquaintance.

BELL. Not at all, Miss Hedway. It's a matter of daily occurrence in our profession.

DORA. (*coming down R.C.*) Indeed!

BELL. (*L.C.*) We lawyers are used to receiving all sorts of confidences.

DORA. But this is a case in which you will be expected to give confidence.

BELL. (*rather astonished*) Really?

DORA. You are engaged to be married to my friend, Miss Jadbury.

BELL. I have that honour.

DORA. But are you sure you're not married already? Now be careful how you answer!

BELL. Married already? No, we shall not be married till the autumn. What would be the use of a secret marriage?

DORA. (*severely*) Then you do not approve of secret

marriages? (*he looks amazed*) Or irregular marriages? Or marriages at all out of the ordinary line?

BELL. Certainly not!

DORA. Then your first wife is not living? Now be careful how you answer.

BELL. (*taking it as a joke*) My first wife! Well, not if I know it!

DORA. Ah, I see—you don't *know*!

BELL. My experience is, that if a man's wife *is* alive, she generally *lets* him know it!

DORA. You confess then that you have been married before?

BELL. I have no recollection of such an event.

DORA. Your name is Bellaby—you are sure of that?

BELL. I will take my affidavit.

DORA. And your Christian name is—do I clearly understand that your Christian name is—? (*making an effort to pronounce it—fails*)

BELL. (*taking card from case*) Tom Bellaby. Rather an unusual name. T.O.M. Bellaby. The only one in the London Directory.

DORA. (*taking card and looking at it*). The same name—the same address that he gave before. (*shows great emotion and drops in chair L. of the screen*)

BELL. (*aside*) What is the matter with her? (*to DORA*) Shall I get you anything—a glass of water—smelling salts?

DORA. Nothing—nothing. (*rises and crosses a little up c., then down*) And you, sir, can calmly lead that innocent girl to the altar, knowing—as a lawyer you *must* know—that you are married to another?

BELL. (*amazed*) Another? What do you mean?

DORA. Do you happen to remember your visit to Trinidad?

BELL. Trinidad?

DORA. Ah, you do remember Trinidad!

BELL. I've seen it on the map.

DORA. Perhaps you remember signing a contract, which married you to a young girl—*Matilda Dwyer*?

BELL. (L.C.) *Matilda Dwyer*? (*beginning to take in the situation; aside*) Oh, Christopher!

DORA. (C.) You do recall it! I am *Matilda Dwyer*!

BELL. Good gracious! (*aside*) What was the name that Christopher used? Ah, I remember! It was *Glibb*! (*aloud*) You are *Matilda Dwyer*, are you? Then you are confusing me with someone else. Your name is *Glibb*. (*approaching her*)

DORA. (*astonished*) *Glibb*? What do you mean, sir? Don't touch me! (*backs a little to R.C.*)

BELL. I had no intention of touching, Miss Dwyer !

DORA. My name is Hedway !

BELL. Just now you said it was Dwyer ! Now be careful how you answer.

DORA. So it was—Matilda Dora Dwyer !

BELL. Then how are *you* Miss Hedway ?

DORA. When my father died, I assumed my uncle's name—it enabled me to conceal my identity from *you*. (*crosses L.*)

BELL. Why didn't you continue to conceal your identity ?

DORA. Because I found that you were to become the husband of my dear friend Nelly. She knows nothing—poor girl—absolutely nothing !

BELL. I beg pardon. Nelly is a very well-informed young lady.

DORA. (*taking paper from desk R.C.*) She'll be a better informed young lady presently. I'll show her this marriage contract.

BELL. (*crossing to R.C. ; taking paper and looking at it ; aside*) My name—in Chris's handwriting—So I'm the friend whose card he gave, and whose name he borrowed—not Glibb. I'd like to pay him out for this.

DORA. (*L.C. taking document again*) Well, sir ?

BELL. (*seriously*) Miss Hedway, I was *never* in Trinidad—I *never* signed that document—the man who *did* sign it assured me that the name was Glibb.

DORA. Glibb ! (*sinks into chair L. of table*)

Enter GLIBB C. as though looking for something. He takes no notice of the others, but looks over things on table, etc.

After GLIBB walks down slowly DORA rises and goes

L.C. She continues, aside to BELLAMY.

DORA. And do you mean to tell me that the person who falsely signed your name to that paper is that harmless man who was never known to speak a word against a human being in his life ?

BELL. (*R.C.*) But he wrote this. I merely repeat what I was told.

DORA. What is he looking for ?

BELL. Perhaps he is looking for his tongue.

DORA goes to MR. GLIBB, takes him by the hand and pulls him down C. He is frightened.

DORA. Tell me the truth, I implore you, if you have never told it in your life before. (*he exhibits great astonishment*) Were you ever in Trinidad ?

GLIBB gazes at her in amazement and tries to get free, and walks rapidly and then runs, she after him, round the room at back, then to L. ; then exit GLIBB rapidly L. Frightened to death ; DORA leans against door.

BELL. (*who has been laughing R.C.*) Miss Hedway, let me set you right. The person who signed that document, using my name instead of his own, was—

DORA. (*coming c.*) Was—?

BELL. Not Glibb, but Christopher Jedbury.

DORA. (L.C.) Christopher Jedbury!

BELL. He told me that he used the name of Glibb, but this document proves that he used mine.

DORA. (*overcome*) Christopher Jedbury? (*chair R. of table L.*) Christopher Jedbury, you say? Christopher Jedbury is my husband? (*rises*) Has he any suspicion that I am his wife?

BELL. Not the least in the world.

DORA. (*as if a sudden fear had seized her, crosses c. quickly*) Is it—the old man—or the young?

BELL. Jedbury Junior. (*she gives a sigh of relief; he smiles*)

DORA. (*aside*) The darling—the wretch! He deserves to be punished. (*aloud*) Promise me you will not tell him you have made this discovery.

BELL. I promise you (*JED's voice heard*), but look (*pointing out back*), he is coming. You can tell him yourself.

DORA. (*embarrassed*) No, not just yet. (*aside, crosses R.*) He would read the joy in my face. (*aside to BELL*) You won't tell him, will you? (*confusedly*) I am coming back in a minute—presently—(*aside*) I must have a moment—to think—to think—all alone. Oh, Mr. Bellaby. (*exit door R.*)

Enter JED. J. from verandah.

JED. J. (*coming down c. indifferently*) Hallo, old man—how are you?

BELL. (L.C.) Well, of all the cool customers you are the most frigid. (*they shake hands*)

JED. J. (R.C.) Nothing of the sort. I have never registered less than eighty since I landed in this balmy climate. Don't say a word till I get it off my mind. I am head and ears in love! Phew! that's done! (*sits L.C.*)

BELL. Chris, old man, I'm with you!

JED. J. But why haven't you written me all these months? Have you found her? Is she dead or alive?

BELL. She? Who?

JED. J. There's only one she! Matilda, of course!

BELL. Oh, Matilda? She's dead—died of delirium tremens in the Sandwich Islands. Particulars in my trunk. Sorry for you, old man, awfully sorry for you. (*runs out by verandah L.*)

JED. J. Matilda dead—and he's sorry for me! (*claps his*

hands wildly) Dead ! Oh, I'm the happiest man on earth. (*dances*) Matilda (*blowing a kiss to the ceiling*) I wish you the compliments of the season. I hope you have a happy future before you. Oh, Matilda, Matilda ! (*capers about R. with chair*)

DORA enters L.

DORA. Really, Mr. Jedbury, your conduct is extraordinary. (*aside*) I've borrowed some of uncle's discipline ! (*goes C.*)

JED. J. Wait, Dora—I may call you Dora this once—I'm so happy. She's dead ! (*dances*) It's my natural state of mind. I'm celebrating the arrival of my family.

DORA. (*coldly*) You appear to be very fond of your family ! (*aside*) I'm doing beautifully !

JED. J. Oh, Dora—I may call you Dora just this once—it isn't that. My troubles are all over. I've buried them !

DORA. (*perplexed*) Buried them ?

JED. J. Yes. They died of delirium tremens in the Sandwich Islands.

DORA. What on earth are you talking about ?

JED. J. Oh, Dora—I may call you Dora this once—if I tell you, you will hate me !

DORA. (*tenderly*) No, I won't ! I—I—couldn't (*aside pulling herself together*) H'm ! discipline !

JED. J. Sit down then ! (*places chair*)

DORA. (*sitting R. by piano*) I'm glad Nelly has come. You need someone near you !

JED. J. (*putting his chair nearer*) Yes.

DORA. (*withdrawing hers a little*) A sister—

JED. J. Well, not precisely a sister, don't you know !

DORA. Then perhaps a maiden aunt might do !

JED. J. Say a maiden, without the aunt.

DORA. We won't be particular about the relationship !

JED. J. Excuse me, I know you'll excuse me, but we will be particular about the relationship. I've got all the female relations I want, excepting one.

DORA. And that is— ?

JED. J. A wife (*rises ; sits on piano*)

DORA. (*pretending to misunderstand*) I see. You haven't been able to persuade any woman to accept you. (*sits on piano*)

JED. J. Oh, Dora—I may call you Dora just this once. Let me explain. Now, you think I'm a bad fellow, dissipated, and—

DORA. Think ? Oh no, I don't think !

JED. J. You mean that you know it. (*turns away offended*, DORA stretches out her hands affectionately behind his back, he

turns suddenly, and, to her confusion, seizes her hands) I accept your apology. (*tenderly*) Dora—let me call you Dora this once—please be friends with me, for I am not a drunkard, nor a gambler, and—Oh, Dora, I've been in love with you ever since I first saw you, and the only reason I never told you before was because—because—

DORA. Because ?

JED. J. Because I was married already !

DORA. (*with pretended horror*) Mr. Jedbury. (*aside*) Poor fellow.

JED. J. (*with eagerness*) But she's dead, Dora, she's dead ?

DORA. (*puzzled*) Dead ?

JED. J. Yes, she died of sandwiches—in delirium tremens—I don't know what she died of, but I do know that she's defunct. Gone to a better world !

DORA. How do you know that—that—she is defunct ?

JED. J. Bellaby told me so !

DORA. (*astonished*) Bellaby told you so ?

JED. J. Oh, yes, he's in my confidence. Capital fellow. (*taking her hand*) But, Dora, don't keep me in suspense !

DORA. (L.C., *tenderly*) I won't ! (*suddenly remembering herself*) Unhand me, sir.

JED. J. (R.C., *releasing her*) There, Dora, now you are unhandled.

DORA. How dared you make love to me, while you were a married man ? Why didn't you go to your wife ?

JED. J. (*confused*) I—I—shouldn't have known where to find her !

DORA. Why didn't you look for her ?

JED. J. What was the use ? I shouldn't have known her !

DORA. Ah ! Your cruelty effected a change in her appearance.

JED. J. Very likely—that is I don't know. (*aside*) How the deuce can I say that I never saw her ? She wouldn't believe me.

DORA. (*with mock severity*) So, you deserted her ?

JED. J. Oh, no, I didn't desert her. She—she—that is—we—we got separated before we were married, you know !

DORA. You mean that she deserted you ?

JED. J. (*jumping at the solution*) Exactly. No, that isn't it. The fact is, we deserted each other. You see, she couldn't help it. She was forced into the match by a crazy old father !

DORA. (*aside*) That's right. But I must punish him a little more. (*aloud*) Mr. Jedbury, did I ever give you the slightest encouragement ?

JED. J. (*humbly*) No, Dora.

DORA. (*with dignity*) Miss Hedway, if you please.

JED. J. Yes, Miss Hedway—I mean No, Miss Hedway.
(*gulps down the word*)

DORA. Didn't it ever occur to you that I had the best reason in the world for not doing so?

JED. J. (*same bus.*) Yes, Miss Doorway—No, Miss Hedway (*gulps as before*)

DORA. Then I will tell you that I am married already!

JED. J. Married? Married to whom?

DORA. To your friend Mr. Bellaby—Mr. Tom Bellaby!

JED. J. Bellaby—Bellaby? (*staggers, overcome, leans against table*)

DORA. (*alarmed*) Chris— (*catches him by the wrist*)

JED. J. (*imitating her manner*) Unhand me, Madame!

DORA. (*aside, laughing*) Poor fellow! (*aloud, imitating his manner*) Now, you are unhande.

JED. J. (*recovering*) Married—to Bellaby?

DORA. To Mr. Tom Bellaby.

JED. J. And yet the earth revolves on its axis. To Bellaby, I think you said?

DORA. Yes.

JED. J. When?

DORA. That is *my* business.

JED. J. Where?

DORA. That is *his* business.

JED. J. How?

DORA. That is *our* business. If you don't believe it, ask Mr. Bellaby!

JED. J. Ask him? I'll—I'll exterminate him!

DORA. Very well. Let me know when you get finished. In the meantime, I wish you good morning. (*exit R.U.E.*)

Enter BELLABY by verandah, c.l.

BELL. (*coming down c. ; aside*) Now to get even with him. (*aloud*) Where's Nelly? I can't find her!

JED. J. (R.C.) Scoundrel!

BELL. (L.C.) What's the matter?

JED. J. How dare you ask where's Nelly? I have just had a conversation with your wife!

BELL. (*puzzled*) My wife? (*a light breaks in upon him; he laughs heartily*)

JED. J. (*aside*) And he can laugh! (*aloud*) Well, sir, I can laugh as well as you. (*laughs mechanically*) Ha, ha, ha!

BELL. So she told you herself, did she? (*laying his hand familiarly on his shoulder*)

JED. J. (*removing the hand with exaggerated dignity*) She

did! Why couldn't you have acted as a man, and told me months ago?

BELL. Tell you months ago—how could I? I didn't know it.

JED. J. Didn't know it? Why, you unblushing hypocrite, how could you be married without knowing it? Don't attempt to lie out of it. Of course you depended on my not finding it out. She told me herself that you were her husband.

BELL. She did, did she? Well (*with blustering air*) I am her husband and that's all there is about it. (*down L.C.*)

JED. J. And this wretch can talk in this calm way about it. Are your senses taking leave of you, or are mine? (*up stage*)

BELL. Yours, dear boy, yours. Try to be calm and cool while I tell you that your sister Nelly and I—

JED. J. (*down*) You villain, don't you presume to mention my sister Nelly again in the same breath with yourself.

BELL. (*pretending to get angry*) I had intended telling you all about your wife. I thought you'd perhaps like to know where she is!

JED. J. Where she is? You told me she was dead. How can I know where she is?

BELL. Yes, I didn't like to tell you all at once, but since you're making such a fool of yourself all because of a little peccadillo of mine—

JED. J. Peccadillo—Great Heaven!—here's a man married to one woman, making love to another, and he calls that a peccadillo.

BELL. Aren't you married to one woman, and haven't you been making love to another?

JED. J. That's a very different affair!

BELL. You're married to Matilda Dwyer, and you've been making love to—(*pause*)—to my wife, confound you!

JED. J. But you just told me my wife was dead. That she died of tremendous sandwiches in the Delirium Islands.

BELL. That was only my little joke. I've bad news for you. Your wife is alive!

JED. J. Alive! Matilda alive—my brain is spinning!

BELL. Yes. Matilda's alive, and what's worse, she's in this very house.

JED. J. Where?

BELL. (*trying to conceal his laughter*) Find out. If you'd treated me decently I might have helped you, but instead of that, I am a scoundrel. Where is she? Find out. And if you dare to make love to my wife again— (*shakes his fist in* JED. J.'s face and goes up C.)

JED. J. (*following him up*) And if you dare to make love to my sister—— (*follows him up to verandah; exit BELLABY L.C.; JED. J. remains up, looking after him*)

JED. S. and MAJOR enter door L.

JED. S. (L.C.) Your kindness to my son shall never be forgotten.

MAJOR. Shure it's entirely mutual. (*goes up R. slightly*)

JED S. (*seeing CHRIS.*) Christopher, my son, I've taken a long journey to ask your forgiveness!

Enter Mrs. J.

JED. J. (*coming down; extending hand*) Don't speak of it dad. (MAJOR goes up R.)

MRS. J. My son! My dear boy!

JED. J. What, mother!

JED. S. Whimper! No, hang it. I don't want him. (*crosses to her*) Margaret, I've been an old fool.

MRS. J. Christopher, you have.

Enter BELLABY, NELLY, and Mrs. GLIBB; they are followed by Mr. GLIBB; they are all listening to BELLABY, who is telling them about his discovery; BELLABY and NELLY go R.; Mrs. GLIBB and Mrs. J. remain together L.C.

GLIBB. (*slowly and deliberated*) Hoo—Hoo—ray! (*coming C.; all start*)

MRS. G. George, you chatterbox!

JED. J. (*astonished*) What's the row?

BELL. (*approaching him R.C.*) I have some news!

JED. J. No? Am I free?

Enter DORA C.

BELL. On the contrary, you are bound and fettered for life—(*Takes DORA by the hand and brings her to JED. J. C.*) to Matilda—Dora—Dwyer. (*returns to NELLY.*)

JED. J. What, you are not—?

DORA. (C) Yes, I am!

JED. J. (L.C., *rapturously*) But Bellaby says—

DORA. That his name is on my marriage contract. So it is!

JED. J. (*remembering*) What an idiot I am! Forgive me, Tom, for borrowing your name. I was driven to it!

JED. S. Then this is the lady you married?

JED. J. Hush, the Major doesn't know!

MAJOR. (*coming down*) Indeed! And what is it the Major doesn't know?

JED. J. That I have the honour to—

MAJOR. To be making love to my niece? (*laughs*) The sleeping partner has had a wakeful eye on you for some time.

JED. J. Then you consent?

MAJOR. Yes. With all my heart. (*beckoning JED. S. up stage where they join*)

JED. J. (*aside to DORA*) You won't mind going through it again?

DORA. No. But this time I shall endeavour to be present at my own wedding.

JED. S. (*to MAJOR up stage*) I think we had better give him control of the Bombay house, Major.

MAJOR *beckons to JED. S. and to MRS. J. and MRS. G.*

They nod and go off L.C. NELLY sees the MAJOR's manœuvres and pulls BELL's sleeve. He looks at DORA and JED. J. and then goes off with NELLY the same as the others have done. GLIBB is now standing alone up L. gazing at nothing. The MAJOR motions him; he pays no attention, then the MAJOR leads him to exit. GLIBB is about to drop behind when the MAJOR seizes his arm, thrusts him off, and follows himself. This is all done quietly but quickly, while DORA and JED. J. are talking inaudibly.

JED. J. (*who hasn't seen the manœuvres, looks at the floor*) Rather, you make me feel very proud—I should say that—what I mean is—(*DORA pulls him by the sleeve; he looks round, sees that they are all gone*) He doesn't seem to be here (*nervously*) He is a decent sort of chap after all!

DORA. (*nervously*) Yes, they none of them seem to be here.

JED. J. (*nervously*) Yes, they are all decent sort of chaps. (*a pause*) DORA—I may say Dora this once?

DORA. Chris! (*they rush into each other's arms as curtain falls*)

CURTAIN.

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